# THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

*BEING*

*A Translation With Notes*

*OF*

The Kitāb Qawā 'id al-Aqā'id

*OF*

Al-Ghazzāli's "Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn"

*By*

**NABIH AMIN FARIS**
*American University of Beirut*
*Beirut, Lebanon*

Book II

**SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF**
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NABIH AMIN FARIS

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*To*

*the Memory of my father*

**AMIN FARIS**

In Gratitude and Reverence

# PREFACE

The *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazzāli is divided into four quarters (sing. *rub'*). The first deals with the acts of worship (*al-'ibādāt*), the second with the usages of life (*al-mu'āmalāt*), the third with the destructive matters of life (*al-muhlikāt*), and the fourth with the saving matters of life (*al-munajjiyāt*). Each of these four quarters comprises ten books (sing. *kitāb*). The present work represents the second book in the first quarter. It deals with the foundations of the articles of faith and is, perhaps, the most important part of the first quarter.

The texts utilized in the preparation of the present translation were the following: The first is the text printed at Kafr al-Zaghāri in A.H. 1352 from the older Cairo edition of A.H. 1289. It is referred to in the notes as 'C'. The second is that contained in the text of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍa al-Zabīdi's commentary on the *Iḥyā'*, known as the *Ithāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn bi-Sharḥ Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, printed in ten volumes in Cairo A.H. 1311; it is referred to in the notes as SM (text). The third is the text which is reproduced in the margin of the same *Ithāf al-Sādah*; it is referred to in the notes as SM (margin). The fourth and, perhaps, the most important is the text contained in a four volume manuscript at the Princeton University Library (Philip K. Hitti, Nabih Amin Faris, and Butrus Abd-al-Malik, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Garrett*

*Collection of Arabic Manuscripts in the Princeton University Library*, Princeton, 1938, No. 1481). It probably dates from the late fifteenth century. This text, called 'B' in the notes, corresponds to SM (text), while 'C' corresponds to SM (margin).

The first book of the first quarter, the well-known *Kitāb al-'Ilm*, was published, under the title of *The Book of Knowledge*, by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf of Lahore 1962. Once again I am grateful to Sh. M. Ashraf for his continued interest in seeing as many of the books of the *Iḥyā*, appear in English. And once again I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the three Princeton scholars: the late Edwin E. Conklin, the late Harold H. Bender, and Philip K. Hitti, and to the American Philosophical Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge in Philadelphia, without whose imaginative help neither *The Book of Knowledge* nor the present work would have been done. May I also express my thanks to my students: Mr. Robert Hazo, Mr. John Dudley Woodberry, and Major Angus M. Mundy who read the manuscript and made several useful observations, and to Dr. John H. Patton, Professor of Religion, Park College, Parksville, Mo., for his careful examination of the manuscript and his valuable suggestions.

Nabih Amin Faris

American University of Beirut
October 31, 1962.

# BOOK II

"In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate".

The Foundations of the Articles of Faith,
Containing Four Sections.

## SECTION I

*On the Exposition of the Creed of the Orthodox Community as Embodied in the Two Words of the Shahadah which form One of the Pillars of Islam.*

We say—and our trust is in God—praise be to God the Creator, the Restorer, the Doer of whatever He wills, He Whose throne is glorious and Whose power, mighty, Who guides the elect to the orthodox path and the right way, Who grants them benefits once they affirm His unity by guarding the articles of faith from the obscurities of doubt and hesitation, Who leads them to imitate the way of His chosen Apostle and to follow the example of his most honoured Companions by directing their footsteps to the way of truth, Who reveals Himself to them in His Essence and in His works by His beautiful attributes which none perceive except he who inclines his ear in contemplation, Who makes known to them that He is one in His Essence without any associate, single (*fard*) without any compeer, eternal (*ṣamad*) without any opposite, separate (*munfarid*) without any like. He is one, ancient (*qadīm*)with nothing preceding Him, eternal (*azali*) without any beginning, abiding in existence with none after Him, everlasting (*abadi*)

without any end, subsisting without cessation, abiding without termination. He has not ceased and He will not cease to be described by the epithets of majesty. At the end of time He will not be subject to dissolution and decay, but He is the first and the last, the external and the internal, and He knows all.

1. Transcendence (*tanzih*). We attest that He is not a body possessing form, nor a substance restricted and limited: He does not resemble other bodies either in limitation or in accepting division. He is not a substance and substances do not exist in Him; He is not an accident and accidents do not exist in Him. No, He resembles no entity and no entity resembles Him; nothing is like Him and He is not like anything; measure does not bound Him and boundaries do not contain Him; directions do not surround Him and neither the earths nor the Heavens are on different sides of Him. Truly, He is seated on the throne after the manner in which He said and in the sense in which He willed —in a state of equilibrium removed from contact, fixity of location, stability, envelopment, and change. The throne does not support Him, but the throne and those who carry it are supported by the grace of Him power and are constrained by His hand. He is above the throne and above the Heavens and above everything to the limits of the earth with an aboveness which does not bring Him nearer to the throne and the Heavens, just as it does not make Him farther from the earth. No, He is highly exalted above the throne and the Heavens, just as He is highly exalted above the earth. Nevertheless, He is near to every entity and is "nearer to a

creature than his jugular vein";[1] and He witnesses everything since His nearness does not resemble the nearness of bodies, just as His essence does not resemble the essence of bodies. He does not exist in anything, just as nothing exists in Him: He has too much exalted Himself that any place should contain Him, just as He has too much sanctified Himself that time should limit Him. No, He was before He had created time and place, and just as He was, He now is. He is distinct from His creatures through His attributes. There is not in His essence any other besides Him, nor in any other besides Him, His essence. He is far removed from change of state or of location. Events have no place in Him and mishaps do not befall Him. No, He does not cease. in the epithets of His Majesty, to be far removed from decay, and in the attributes of His perfection He has no need of an increase in perfection. In His essence His existence is known by reason; His essence is seen with the eyes, a blessing from Him and a grace to the righteous in the life everlasting and a completion of bliss from Him through beholding His gracious face.

2. Life and Power. We witness that He is living, powerful, almighty and all-subduing; inadequacy and weakness befall Him not; slumber overtakes Him not nor sleep; dissolution does not prevail over Him nor death. He is Lord of the visible world and the invisible [80], and of power and might; His are dominion, subjugation, creation, and command; the Heavens are rolled in His right hand and created things are subjugated in His hand. He is separate in creating

1. *Sūrah* L : 15.

and inventing; He is alone in bringing into existence and innovating. He created all creatures and their works, and decreed their sustenance and their lives; nothing decreed escapes His hand and the mutations of things are not beyond His power. The things which He decreed cannot be numbered and the things which He knows have no end.

3. Knowledge. We attest that He knows all things which can be known, grasping all that happens from the limits of earth to the highest heaven; not an atom's weight in the earth or in Heaven is beyond His knowledge. Yes, He knows the creeping of the black ant upon the solid rock in the darkest night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air. He knows the secrets and that which is more shrouded in secrecy than secrets; He has knowledge of the suggestions of the mind, of the movements of the thoughts, and of the concealed things of the inmost parts by a knowledge which is ancient from eternity and by which He has not ceased to be described through the ages, not by a knowledge which renews itself and arises in His essence through experience.[1]

4. Will. We attest that He is the willer of all things that are, the ruler of all originated phenomena; there does not come into the visible or invisible world anything meagre or plenteous, small or great, good or evil, or any advantage or disadvantage, belief or unbelief, knowledge or ignorance, success or failure, increaseordecrease,obedienceordisobedience, except by His will. What He wills is and what He does not

1. Literally through ingress (*ḥulūl*) and egress (*intiqāl*).

will is not; there is not a glance of the eye nor a stray thought of the heart that is not subject to His will. He is the Creator, the Restorer, the Doer of whatsoever He wills. There is none that rescinds His command, none that supplements His decrees, none that dissuades a servant from disobeying Him, except by His help and mercy, and none has power to obey Him except by His will. Even though mankind, jinn, angels, and devils were to unite to move the weight of a single atom in the world or to render it still, without His will they would fail. His will subsists in His essence as one of His attributes. He has not ceased to be described by it from eternity, willing, in His infinity, the existence of things at their appointed time which He has decreed. So they come into existence at their appointed times even as He has willed in His infinity without precedence of subsequence. They come to pass in accordance with His knowledge and will without variation or change. He does not direct things through arrangement of thought and awaiting the passage of lime, and therefore one thing does not distract Him from another.

5. Hearing and Sight. We attest that He is a hearer and a see-er. He hears and sees and no audible thing, however faint, is beyond His hearing, and no visible thing, however minute, is hidden from His sight. Distance does not prevent His hearing and darkness does not obstruct His seeing. He sees without eyes and hears without ears,' just as He perceives without a brain, and seizes without a hand, and creates without an instrument, since His attributes do not resemble the attributes of created things, just

as His essence does not resemble the essence of created things.

6. Speech. And we attest that He speaks, commanding, forbidding, promising, and threatening, with a speech from etenity, ancient, and self-existing. Unlike the speech of created things, it is not a sound which is caused through the passage of air or the friction of bodies; nor is it a letter which is enunciated through the movement of the lips and tongue. We also attest that the Quran, the Bible, the Gospel, and the Psalms are His books revealed to His apostles; that the Quran is repeated by the tongue, written down in copies, and preserved in the heart, yet it is, nevertheless ancient, subsisting in the essence of God, not subject to division and separation through its transmission to the heart and (transcription on) leaves. We further attest that Moses heard the speech of God without sound and without word, just as the righteous see the essence of God in the hereafter, without substance or accident.

And since He has these qualities, He is living, knowing, willing, hearing, seeing and speaking through life, power, knowledge, will, hearing, sight, and speech, not solely through His essence.

7. Works. And we attest that there is no entity besides Him, except what originates by His action and proceeds from His justice, after the most beautiful and perfect and complete and just of ways. We attest that He is wise in His actions, just in His judgments; His justice is not comparable with that of men, since tyranny is conceivable in the case of the latter when he deals with the property of

others than himself; but tyranny is inconceivable in the case of God, for He does not encounter any property of another besides Himself, so that his dealing with it might be tyrannous. Everything besides Him, men and jinn, angels and devils, Heaven and earth, animals, plants, and inanimates, substance and accident, as well as things perceived and things felt, are all originated things which He created by His power from nothing and made from nought, since He existed in eternity by Himself and there was not along with Him any other. So He originated creation thereafter as a manifestation of his power and a realisation of that which had preceded of His will and that which existed in eternity of His word, not because He had any need or necessity for it.

We also attest that He is magnanimous in creating and inventing and in imposing obligations(*taklīf*), not doing it through necessity. We attest that He is gracious in beneficence and reform, though not through any need. Munificence and kindness, beneficence and grace are His, since He is able to bring upon His creatures all manner of torture and to shower upon them all kinds of pain and affliction. Even if He should do this, it would be justice on His part, it would not be vile, it would not be tyrannous. He rewards His believing servants for their acts of obedience in the spirit of generosity and encouragement rather than according to their merit and desert. For He is under obligation to none and tyranny is inconceivable in Him. None possesses any claim against Him. His claim to obedience is obligatory and binding upon all creatures [81] because He made

it obligatory upon them through the words of His prophets and not by reason alone. But He sent His apostles and showed their veracity through explicit miracles, and they conveyed His commands and prohibitions as well as His promises and threats. So it became obligatory upon all creatures to believe in what they brought.

### *The Meaning of the Second Word of the Witness (al-shahādah)*

The second word of the witness is that which testifies that the apostleship belongs to the Apostle, and that God sent the unlettered (*ummi*) Qurashite Prophet Muhammad, as an apostle to all the Arabs and the non-Arabs, to the jinn and men. And by his law He abrogated the other laws, except such of them as He confirmed. And He gave him precedence over all other prophets and made Him Lord of mankind, and declared incomplete any profession of faith which attests to unity, i.e. "There is no god but Allah," unless it is followed by the witness to the Apostle, namely, "Muhammed is the Apostle of Allah," And he made belief in him, in all the things which he narrated concerning the affairs of this world and the hereafter, obligatory upon all creation. And He will not accept the belief of any creature until he believes in that which the Prophet narrated concerning the things after death, of which the first is the question of Munkar and Nakīr. These are two awful and terrible beings who will make the dead one sit up in the grave, both soul and body; they will ask him about the unity of God and about the apostleship, saying, "Who is the Lord, and what is the religion,

and who is thy prophet?"[1] They are the two inquisitors of the grave and their questions comprise the first examination after death.

Again, man should believe that the punishment of the grave is real and that His judgment of the body and soul is just and in accordance with His will. And he should believe in the balance with the two scales and the tongue—the magnitude of which is like the stages of the Heavens and the earth; in it the deeds are weighed by the power of God, even to the weight of the mote and the mustard seed, in order to establish exact justice. The records of the good deeds will be placed in a good manner in the scale of light, and then the balance will be weighed down by them according to the measure of their favour in the sight of God and by His grace, while the records of the evil deeds will be cast in a vile manner in the scale of darkness, and they will be light in the balance through the justice of God. He should believe also that the bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*) is real; it is a bridge stretched over Hell, sharper than the edge of the sword and finer than a hair. The feet of the unbelievers slip on it, according to the decree of God, and they fall into the Fire; but the feet of the believers stand firm upon it, by the grace of God, and so they pass into everlasting life. And he should believe in the frequented tank (*ḥawḍ*) the tank of Muhammed, from which the believers will drink before entering Paradise and after [82] crossing the bridge. Whoever drinks a single draught from it will never thirst again. Its width is the distance of one month's journey; its waters are

1. *Cf.* al-Tirmidhi, Janā'iz : 70.

whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. Around it are ewers in number like the stars of heaven,[1] and into it flow two canals from *al-Kawthar*.[2] And he should believe in the judgment and the distinctions between men in it, that some will be closely questioned that some will be treated with leniency and that others will enter Paradise without questioning—these are God's favourites (*al-muqarrabūn*). God will ask whomsoever He will of the prophets concerning the carrying of His message, and whomsoever of the unbelievers concerning their rejection of the apostles;[3] and He will ask the innovators concerning the law and the Muslims concerning their works. And he should believe that the monotheists will be released from Hell-fire after vengeance has been taken on them so that there will not remain in Hell a single monotheist. And he should believe in the intercession of the prophets, of the learned, and of the martyrs—each according to his dignity and rank before God. And he who remains of the believers and has no intercessor will be released through the grace of God. Therefore not a single believer will abide in Hell forever; whosoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought out from there. And he should acknowledge the excellence of the Companions [83] and their different ranks, and that the most excellent of mankind, after the Prophet, is Abu-Bakr, and then 'Umar, and then 'Uthman, and then 'Ali. And he should think well of all the Companions and praise them, just as God and His Apostle praised them.

1. *Cf.* al-Tirmidhi, Qiyāmah: 14-15.
2. A river in Paradise. *Cf. Sūrah* CVIII.
3. *Cf.* al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir, *Sūrah* II: 9.

All this was handed down in traditions from the Prophet and from his Companions. Therefore he who subscribes to all this and believes in it without doubting will be of the people of truth and the Law, thus separating himself from the followers of error and heresy.

So we ask God to perfect our faith and make us steadfast in it. We ask this, through His mercy, for ourselves and for all the Muslims throughout the world. Truly He is the most merciful. And may the blessing of God be upon our Lord Muhammed and upon very chosen servant.

## SECTION II

*On the Introduction to Religious Instruction and the Stages of Belief.*

You should know that what we have already stated under the Exposition of the Creed[1] should be presented to the child in his early years in order that he may commit it to memory; its meaning will continue to be unfolded to him little by little as he grows older. The first step is to commit it to memory, after which comes understanding, then belief, then certainty and acceptance, all of which obtain in the child without proof. For God showed His grace to man by preparing his heart from the beginning for belief without the necessity of any argument or proof. How can this be denied when all the articles of faith of the common folk are based on pure instruction (*talqin*) and simple acceptance on authority (*taqlid*)? True, a belief which results from simple acceptance of authority may not be free of some weakness at the beginning, in that it can be shaken and impaired by its opposite whenever that is mentioned. It should, therefore, be strengthened and confirmed in the heart of the child and the layman until it becomes well established and unshakeable. But the way to strengthen and confirm it does not lie in learning the art of argumentation and speculation. It is found in the reading and exposition of the Quran, in the study of

1. See Book II, Sect. 1.

the traditions and their meaning, and in the performance of religious duties and acts of worship. Consequently a child's belief continues to increase in strength through what falls on his ears of the proofs and arguments of the Quran, through what reaches him of the illustrations of tradition and their merits, through what shines on him of the lights of the acts of worship and the fulfilment of the duties thereof, and finally by means of what comes to him from watching the righteous, sitting in their company, and listening to their words, as well as from observing their mark and manner in obeying God, fearing Him, and humbling themselves before Him. Instruction will then be like the sowing of the seed in the heart, while these actions will serve to water and tend the seed until it grows up and becomes strong and develops into a good and strong tree the roots of which are well grounded in the earth, while the branches reach up into the sky.

The child should also be guarded with utmost care against argumentation and speculation, because what argumentation impairs is greater than what it repairs, and what it corrupts is great than what it sets aright. In fact, the practice of strengthening the belief of the child through argumentation is like striking a tree with an iron mallet in the hope of strengthening it. Breaking its limbs in this way, however, will destroy it or, more likely, impair its growth. Seeing should, in this case, suffice. Compare then the creed of the righteous and pious among the common folk with that of the speculators and those given to argumentation and you will find that the

belief of the commoner is as firm as the lofty mountain which is moved neither by storm nor lightning, while the creed of the speculator who guards his belief with the syllogisms of controversy is like a thread hanging in the air, blown to and fro by the winds. This is true of all except those who have heard the proof of belief and have accepted it on authority, just as they have taken hold of belief itself and accepted it on authority, since there is no difference in accepting things on authority between the proof and the thing proved. Thus learning the proof is one thing; arriving at it through independent thinking is another.

But if the child were brought up on this doctrine and should then pursue a worldly activity in order to earn his livelihood, he might not go any farther, though he would, in the opinion of the people of the truth, be saved in the hereafter, since the Law did not require of the barbarous Arabs anything more than a verbal acceptance of the literal meaning of these articles of faith. But study and inquiry, as well as undertaking the working out of proofs, were not required of them at all [84]. But if he should wish to be one of the travellers along the path of the hereafter and be fortunate therein, so that he could continue to act (according to his knowledge), holding fast to piety, "restraining his soul from lust,"[1] and practising self-discipline and self-mortification, there would be opened for him avenues of guidance which would reveal to him the realities of this doctrine throught a divine light cast into his heart by self-mortification (*mujāhadah*), in fulfilment of the promise of God whom

1. *Sūrah* LXXIX; 40.

He said, "And whoso striveth for us, in Our ways We will guide them; for God is assuredly with those who do right."[1] This is, in truth, the precious pearl which is the ultimate goal of the belief of the saints and the favourites of God. The secret which rested in the bosom of Abu-Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and by which he excelled all others referred to this pearl. The revelation of this secret (*sirr*), nay, these secrets, has different stages, depending upon the degree of self-mortification and upon the degree in which the inner self (*al-bāṭin*) is clean and free of things other than God, as well as upon the obtaining of guidance by means of the light of faith (*yaqīn*). This is just like the differences which exist among men in the comprehension of the mysteries of medicine, jurisprudence and the other sciences, since their differences vary with their diligence and with their native endowment (*fiṭrah*) in brilliance and prudence. Just as the former variations are not limited, so are the latter not limited.

(A case). If you say that the study of argumentation and scholastic theology (*kalām*) is blameworthy, like astrology, or that it is permissible (*mubāḥ*) or commendable (*mandūb*), then, you should know that in this particular respect men go to excess and exaggeration on both sides: some say that it is an innovation and therefore unlawful and that, excluding the sin of polytheism (*shirk*), it is better for the servant to face his God guilty of every offence except that of scholasticism; others say that it is an obligation and an ordinance either of the *kifāyah* or the *'ayn* type, that it is the best form of work and the highest kind of oblation,

1. *Sūrah*, XXIX; 69.

and that it is the verification of theology and the safeguard of the religion of God. Among those who hold it unlawful are Shāfi'ī, Mālik, Aḥmad ibn-Hanbal, Sufyān [al-Thawri] and all the traditionists among the Fathers.

Ibn-'Abd-al-A'la[1] once said, "On the day al-Shāfi'ī was debating with Ḥafṣ al-Fard,[2] who was one of the Mu'tazilite theologians, I heard him say, 'Excluding the sin of polytheism it is better for the slave to face his God guilty of every offence than to stand before Him with [even a] little scholasticism.' I have also heard Ḥafṣ say things which I cannot repeat." Ibn-'Abd-al-A'la reported also that al-Shāfi'ī said, "I have discovered among the scholastic theologians things which I never expected to find. Excepting the sin of polytheism, it is better for the servant to disobey all the commandments of God than to address himself to scholastic theology."

Al-Karābīsi related that al-Shāfi'ī was once asked about something scholastic and was consequently infuriated and said, "Ask Ḥafṣ al-Fard and his cohorts about this—may God dishonour them." When al-Shāfi'ī was taken sick, Ḥafṣ came in to him and said, "Who am I?" Al-Shāfi'ī replied, "You are Ḥafṣ al-Fard—may God neither keep nor prosper you until you repent of your sins." Said al-Shāfi'ī again, "If men but knew what predilections lurk in scholastic theology they would have run away from it as they would run away from a lion." And again, "Whenever

1. Yūnus al-Ṣadafi, A.H. 264/A.D. 877-78. See Ibn Khallikān, Vol. III, pp. 548-51.

2. *Al-Fihrist*, p. 120; al-Shahrastāni, *Kitab al-Milal w-al-Niḥal*, ed. William Cureton (London, 1842), pp. pp. 19, 63.

I hear a man say that the name is the thing named, I testify that he is a scholastic theologian and has no religion."

Al-Za'farāni[1] related that al-Shāfi'ī once said, "My judgment concerning the scholastic theologians is that they should be beaten with palm branches and carried in that condition round among the tribes and clans." This, it is said, is the penalty of those who discard the Qur'ān and the traditions and address themselves to scholastic theology.

Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal said, "A scholastic theologian never succeeds. You can hardly find anyone who, having dabbled in scholastic theology, is without unsoundness in his heart." He was so strong in its condemnation that he ostracised al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibi,[2] in spite of the latter's asceticism and godliness, because he composed a work on the refutation of heresy,[3] telling him, "Woe unto you. Do you not first state their heretical beliefs and then answer them, thereby compelling men to study these heresies and to ponder over these dubiosities, all of which will draw them into speculation and controversy." Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal also said, "The scholastic theologians are heretics (sing. *zindiq*)."

(Speaking of the scholastic theologian) Mālik said "Have you seen how, when one of stronger argument

1. Abu 'Ali al-Ḥasan ibn-Muḥammad al-Sabbāḥ, A H. 269/A.D. 874. See ibn-Khallikān, vol I, p. 229; *cf.* al-Sam'āni, f. 275a.

2. Abu 'Abdullāh al-Ḥārith ibn-Asad al-Muḥasibi, A.H. 243/A D. 857. See *al-Fihrist*, p. 184; ibn-Khallikān, Vol. I p. 224. Also Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad* (London, 1935).

3. The title of work is *al Radd 'ala-al-Mu'tazilah* '(*On the Refutation of the Mutazilites.*) See *Fihrist*, p. 184, *l.* 17.

confronts him he will discard his religion for a new one every day?" In other words, the position of the debaters is (constantly) changing. Mālik also said, "The testimony of sectarians and heretics is not permissible." In interpreting this, some of his friends said that he meant by sectarians (*ahl al-ahwā'*) the scholastic theologians, no matter to what school of thought they might belong.

Abu-Yūsuf said, "He who seeks knowledge through speculation will become a heretic (*zindīq*)." Al-Ḥasan [al-Baṣri] said, "Argue not with sectarians and associate with them not, nor hearken unto them."

Thus the traditionists among the Fathers have been unanimous (in their condemnation of scholastic theology). The many strictures which came down to us from them are innumerable. They have said that the companions refrained from scholastic theology only because of their knowledge of the evils it would breed, although they were better informed and more eloquent phrase-makers than anyone else. For this reason the Prophet said, "The hairsplitters are doomed; they are doomed to destruction." By this he meant those who are extravagant in investigation and research. [The traditionists among the Fathers] also protested that if [scholastic theology] were an integral part of religion the Apostle of God would have commanded [his Companions to address themselves to] it, and would have taught [them] its ways. He also would have praised it and commended its protagonists [85]. He thus taught them abstersion (*istinjā'*)[1] and

1. A means of purification which is a religious duty for every Muslim who has attended to the call of nature. It is elaborately described in the tradition: *cf.* al-Dārimi, Ṣalāh; 10-13; ibn-Mājah, Ṭahārah: 15-16.

urged them to study the law of inheritance (*'ilm al-farā'iḍ*)[1] and commended [its teachers]. On the other hand he forbade them to speculate on divine decrees saying, "Refrain from speculation on the decrees of God," and the Companions continued to refrain from such speculations. To add to what the teacher set forth is disloyal and unfair; the Companions are our teachers and our example, and we are their followers and disciples.

The other group protested that the dangers in speculation are such terms as essence (*jawhar*) and accident (*'araḍ*) and the other strange terms with which the Companions were not familiar. But the matter is not difficult to explain, because there is not a single branch of knowledge in which new terms have not been introduced for the sake of conveying meanings, as for example, the science of tradition, the science of interpretation, and the science of jurisprudence. Were these people to encounter terms such as refutation (*naqḍ*), invalidation (*kasr*), composition (*tarkīb*), deduction (*ta'diyah*), and false collocation (*fasād al-waḍ'*), as well as the other questions which are adduced by analogy (*qiyās*), they would not comprehend them. Therefore the introduction of new terms to signify a definite meaning is just as legitimate as inventing vessels of new shape and form for use in permissible things. If it is the meaning of these terms which is dangerous, we do not mean to attain through them anything except the knowledge of the proofs for the creation of the universe, the unity of the Creator, and (the nature of) His attributes as they have come down

1. *Cf.* al-Tirmidhi, Farād'iḍ : 2; ibn-Mājah, Farā'iḍ : 1.

to us in the Law. Since when, then, has the knowledge of God by proof been unlawful? But if it is sectarianism, fanaticism, enmity, hatred, and all that speculation and controversy breed which are meant and intended, then these are unlawful and should be guarded against and avoided, just as pride, conceit, hypocrisy, and the desire for power which the sciences of tradition, interpretation, and jurisprudence breed are unlawful and should be guarded against and avoided. Nevertheless, the fact that a branch of knowledge may lead to [these evils] should not prevent one from seeking that knowledge. For how could the mention of a piece of evidence and the desire to learn and investigate it be forbidden when God said, "Say: Give your proof if ye speak the truth."[1] And again "...that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof."[2] And again, "Have ye any authority for this?"[3] in other words ["Have ye any] evidence or proof [for this?"]. And again, "Say: Peremptory evidence is God's."[4] And again, "Hast thou not considered him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had given him the kingdom? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is He who giveth life and death,' he said, 'It is I who give life and death,' Abraham said, 'Since God bringeth the sun from the East, do thou then bring it from the West. The infidel was confounded, for God guideth not the evildoers."[5] In this instance God mentioned with commendation the controversy between Abraham and his

1. *Sūrahs* II : 105, XXI : 24, XVII : 69; XXVIII : 75.
2. Ibid., VIII : 44.
3. *Cf. Sūrah* X : 69.
4. *Sūrah* X : 110.
5. Ibid., II : 60.

adversary and how Abraham debated with the adversary and silenced him. God also said, "This is our argument with which we furnished Abraham against his people."[1] And again, "They said, 'O Noah! Already hast thou disputed with us, and increased our disputation."[2] Again, in the story of Pharaoh, God said, "Said Pharaoh, 'Who then is the Lord of the Worlds?' to the words 'What if I show thee that which shall be a proof [of my mission]?"[3] In short the Qur'ān, from beginning to end, is an argument with the unbelievers. The greatest proof of theologians for the unity of God is the word of God when He said, "Had there been in either [Heaven or earth] gods besides God, both would have surely gone to ruin."[4] Their greatest proof for the prophecy is, "And if ye be in doubt as to that which we have sent down to our servant, then produce a *sūrah* like it."[5] Their greatest proof for the resurrection is, "Say: He shall give life to them who first gave them being."[6]

Thus the apostle did not cease to debate with the unbelievers and dispute with them. God said, "Dispute with them in the kindest manner."[7] The Companions, too, used to debate and dispute with the unbelievers, but only in the time of need. At the time of the Companions the need for disputation was small. The first to establish the precedence of summoning innovators back to truth by means of debate and argument was 'Ali ibn-abi-Tālib when he dispatched ibn-'Abbās to the Khārijites. Ibn-'Abbās argued with.

1. *Sūrah* VI : 83,
2. Ibid., XI : 34.
3. Ibid. XXVI : 22-29.
4. Ibid, XXI : 22.
5. Ibid., II : 21.
6. Ibid., XXXVI : 79.
7. Ibid., XVI : 126.

them saying, "Would you rebel against your imām?" But they replied, "He has fought, but did not capture any prisoners or booty." Ibn-'Abbās explained to them that prisoners and booty are taken only in war against unbelievers, adding, "Would any of you, if 'Ā'isha had been taken captive on the Day of the Camel[1] and had fallen to his lot, have deemed it lawful to deal with her as he would have dealt with his own property [and forgot] that she was, according to the express word of the Qur'ān, your mother?"[2] They answered "No," and consequently two thousand of them surrendered.[3]

It was also related that al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣari) once debated with a Qadarite[4] with the result that the latter renounced his error. Similarly, 'Ali ibn-abi-Ṭālib once debated with a Qadarite. It is also related that 'Abdullāh ibn-Mas'ūd debated with Yazīd ibn-'Amīrah[5] on the subject of belief. Said 'Abdullāh [ibn Mas'ūd], "If I say that I am a believer it will be like saying that I am in Paradise." Thereupon Yazīd ibn 'Amīrah said to him, "O Companion of the Apostle of God, what is belief except to believe in

1. Ar. *Yawm al-Jamal*, 10 Jumāda II, A.H. 36 Dec. 4, A.D. 656. The day when 'Ali won a decisive victory against the armies of Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr, 'Ā'isha, who sided with the rebels against 'Ali, watched the battle on a camel, hence the name of the day. She was captured but 'Ali treated her with great deference. See Ṭabari, Vol. I, pp. 3108-3233.

2. *Cf. Sūrah* XXXIII.

3. The incident is related in full in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 318-20, where the number of those who surrendered is given as twenty thousand.

4. The Qadarites denied absolute predestination and believed in free will (*qadar*—power). *Cf.* Sharastāni, pp. 29-31; al-Baghdādi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Badr (Cairo, 1910), pp. 18, 93 *seq*; *Mukhtaṣar al-Farq bayn Firaq*, ed. P. K. Hitti (Cairo, 1924), pp. 95 *seq*; al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shī'ah*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), p. 5.

5. Ibn-Sa'd, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 152.

God, His angels, books and aspostles, as well as in resurrection and the balance [of the day of the Judgement], and to perform prayer, observe the fast, and pay alms. Yet we have trespasses which, if we but knew that they will be forgiven us, we would know that we will be of the people of Paradise. For this reason we say that we are believers, but we do not say that we are of the people of Paradise." Ibn-Mas'ūd replied, "By God, you have said the truth; this is a mistake on my part." Thus it should be said that [the Companions] addressed themselves little to [speculation], and this they did briefly and only in time of need. They did not go into it [as a subject] to be written about or taught, nor did they take it up as a vocation. It is then said that they addressed themselves to it little because the need was small, since no heresy had appeared at that time. They addressed themselves to it briefly because their only purpose was to silence the adversary and compel him to admit his error; they aimed at revealing the truth and removing dubiosities. Yet whenever the confusion of the adversary persisted or his insistence on error continued, they had to prolong their argument, never reckoning, as it were, the need with weight or [86] measure once they had embarked on their [argument]. Their not applying themselves to teaching and writing about it is not unlike their custom with regard to jurisprudence, interpretation, and tradition. Therefore, if it is permissible to compose books on jurisprudence and to work out rare hypothetical cases (*ṣuwar*) which seldom arise, either as a preparation for the time of need, or simply to sharpen

the wits, it is also permissible for us to classify the methods of disputation in preparation for the time with dubiosities flare up or an innovator runs loose; or simply to sharpen the wits or have the argument ready so that when needed it will be within reach of all just as the preparation of armaments for war before the day of battle.

This is practically all that can be said on behalf of the two groups, [the proponents and the opponents of speculation]. If you ask me what I think of this, I will say that the truth of the matter is that those who condemn it absolutely and under all circumstances as well as those who praise it absolutely and unreservedly are wrong. The question should be more carefully analysed.

You should know, then, that first of all a thing, such as wine or carrion, may be pronounced unlawful from its very nature. What I mean by 'its very nature' is that the cause of its being pronounced unlawful is a quality inherent in it: intoxication [in the case of wine] and putrefaction [in the case of carrion]. If we were asked concerning these two things, we would not hesitate to say that they were absolutely unlawful, and would in no way think of allowing carrion to be eaten in time of need, nor ever think of permitting the drinking of wine when a person chokes over a mouthful of food and finds nothing with which to swallow it besides wine.

In the second place a thing may be pronounced unlawful for some other reason, such as underselling your Muslim brother during the period of option

(*khiyār*),[1] trading during the call to prayer, or eating earth which is pronounced unlawful because of its harmful effect. Such things are divided into those which are harmful both in small and large quantities and are therefore pronounced unlawful, like, for example, poison which is fatal whether in small or large quantity; and those which are harmful only when taken in excess like, for example, honey, which when taken in excess is harmful to the feverish patient. The same is true of eating earth. Therefore, in pronouncing wine absolutely unlawful, only the most general cases were taken into consideration. In the event that something new arises, it will be well to consider the attending circumstances. Consequently it is better and safer to analyse each case [and treat it on its own merits].

We return now to the science of scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) to say that it has advantages and disadvantages, usefulness and harm. With regard to its usefulness, whenever it is useful it is either lawful, or commendable, or obligatory, as the occasion demands. As to its harm, whenever it is harmful it is unlawful. Its harm lies in raising doubts and undermining the articles of faith by moving them out from the realm of certitude and determination. These things are lost at the beginning and their restoration by means of proof is doubtful; furthermore it varies with the individual.

Such then is its harm in the orthodox faith. Yet it has another harmful influence which manifests itself

1. A period after the conclusion of a bargain during which either of the parties may cancel the transaction. *Cf.* ibn Mājah, Tijārāt : 13, 18 ; al-Dārimi, Buyū' : 16-18.

in confirming the belief of the heretics in their heresies and establishing them in their hearts so that their claims increase and their insistence on them becomes more stubborn. The kind of them, however, results from the fanaticism which disputation enkindles. For this reason you find that the lay heretic can, through kindness, be easily dissuaded from his error in no time. But if he were brought up in a town where disputation and fanaticism abound it will be impossible for both the ancients and the moderns to remove the heresy from his heart, their combined efforts, notwithstanding. On the contrary, passion, fanaticism, hatred of the adversaries of disputation and non-conformist groups prevail over his heart and prevent him from comprehending the truth so that even if he were told, "Do you want God to remove for you the veil and to reveal to you through personal observation that the truth is on the side of your adversary?" he would dislike it for fear that his adversary would be gladdened by it. This, then, is the chronic disease which has spread among men all over the land. It is a kind of corruption which is set in motion by the disputants through their fanaticism. This much for its harm. As to its benefits [some] think that it is useful in revealing realities and knowing them as they really are. But how far from the truth this is, because the fulfilment of noble desire is not found in disputation. In fact the perplexity and confusion consequent on disputation surpass anything which it may reveal or unfold. If you were to hear that from a traditionist or a half-scholar you might think that they have been moved to that by their ignorance, for men are the enemies of that of which they are ignorant. Take it,

then, from one who has familiarised himself with disputation and, after a careful study and a thorough investigation of it in which he surpassed the extreme limits of its masters and went even further to study in great detail other cognate subjects, has come to dislike it, and has ascertained that the road to the realities of knowledge is closed from this direction. Disputation, as a matter of fact, will inevitably reveal, unfold, and clarify a few things, but this is very rare and only occurs in simple and clear matters which are readily understood even before any thorough study of the art of disputation. It has only one benefit: it preserves the creed for the common folk and safeguards it against the confusion of innovators by different kinds of argumentation. For the layman is swayed by the argument of the innovator although the argument may be false; and to confront a false position with another refutes it. People are expected to follow this creed which we have already mentioned because the Law has ordained it for the good of their temporal and spiritual lives and because the righteous Fathers agreed on it. The learned men are expected to watch over it for the common folk against the ambiguities of the innovators, just as the magistrates are expected to safeguard their property against the attacks of the oppressors and ravishers.

When both its harm and benefit are fully understood by man, he should be like the physician who is adept in the use of dangerous drugs, which he does not apply except to the right place and only at the time of need.

To explain further, the laymen and the common

folk who are engaged in crafts and trades should be left alone in the integrity of their beliefs which [87] they have accepted when they have been instructed in the orthodox faith which we have already stated. To teach them disputation is decidedly harmful to them as it will perhaps arouse doubts in their minds which will shake their belief. Once these doubts are aroused it will not be possible to remedy their shaken belief.

As to the layman who believes in a certain innovation, he should be called back to the truth with kindness and tact and not with fanaticism : with soft words which are convincing to the soul and effective in the heart, words similar to those of the arguments of the Qur'ān and the tradition, mixed with a little admonition and warning. This is much better than debate along the line set down by the scholastic theologians, since the layman, when he hears such arguments, thinks that they are a kind of technique in disputation which the disputant has learned in order to draw men to his belief. Consequently, if the layman fails to reply to these arguments he will assume that the scholastic theologians of his school are capable of refuting them. Disputation with both this man and the former is unlawful. Likewise it is unlawful to argue with one who has fallen victim to doubt, since doubt should be removed with kindness by admonition and understandable proofs free of excessive speculation and endless debate. In fact disputation is useful in only one case, namely, when the layman has been persuaded to believe in an innovation through one

kind of argument, in which case it should be countered by the same kind of argument in order to recall the man to the truth. This, however, applies to him who, because of his fondness of disputation, is no longer satisfied with the ordinary admonitions and warnings, but has reached a stage where nothing will cure him except debate. Consequently it is permissible to argue with him. But in a country where heresy is rare and one rite (*madhhab*) prevails, it should be sufficient to state the articles of faith which we have already mentioned, without any attempt to take up the question of proofs. The person should wait until something questionable arises before he takes up the question of proofs which he should present according to the need. If the heresy were a common one and a fear existed that the children might be beguild with it, then there would be no harm in teaching them the equivalent of what we have included in the book entitled *al-Risālah al-Qudisyah*,[1] as a means for overcoming the influence of the disputations of innovators if that influence should confront the children. This is a brief thing which we included in this book because of its brevity. If [the child] were bright and therefore became aware of a certain question or grew skeptical of something in his mind, then the feared disease has appeared and the malady has become visible. There will be no harm, then, to promote [the child] to the equivalent of that which we have included in the book entitled *al-Iqtisād fi al-I'tiqād*,[2] equalling about fifty folios

1. *The Jerusalem Epistle*, so called because it was written in Jerusalem, comprises Section III of this Book; see below, p. 53.

2. Printed in Cairo, A. H. 1327.

and free from any departures from a discussion of the foundations of the articles of faith to the other investigations of the scholastic theologians. If this should convince [the child] then he might be let alone; but if this should fail to convince him, then the disease has become chronic, the malady rooted, and the epidemic widespread. Let, then, the physician be as kind and tactful as possible, and let him await the will of God until, through His grace, the truth shall be revealed to the child. Otherwise he will persist in his doubt and skepticism as long as it is so ordained.

The amount contained in that book and others of the same kind is that from which benefit can be expected. Books not confined to the same subject are of two kinds. The first comprises books which deal with subject other than the foundations of the articles of faith, such as those which discuss propensities (*i'timādat*),[1] transmutations (*akwān*),[2] and [the different kinds of] perceptions (*idrākāt*),[3] or discoursing on sight (*ru'yah*) : whether or not it has an opposite which is called obstruction (*man'*) or blindness, and that if this obstruction does exist, then it will be an obstruction [which prevents the eye] from [seeing] all invisible things, or [a proof which] verifies every visible thing that can be seen, as well as other misleading trivialities.

The second kind of these books contains a further expansion of the same arguments as applied to other subjects, together with several questions and

1. What the scholastic theologians call propensity (*i'timād*) the philosophers call tendency (*mayl*), both terms being loosely used. See *Dict. of Tech. Terms.*

2. Sing. *Kawn.*

3. Sing, *idrāk,*

answers – details which add nothing but confusion and perplexity to him who has not already been convinced by the previous amount. For there are certain things which become more obscure with dilation and expansion. Were one to say that the investigation into the rules of perceptions and propensities is useful for sharpening the mind which is the instrument of religion just as the sword is the instrument of holy war (*jihād*), hence there is no harm in sharpening it, it will be like saying that playing chess, because it sharpens the mind, is a part of religion. This, however, is insane because the mind may be sharpened through the other sciences of that Law in which there is no fear of harm or injury.

By this you see how much of scholastic theology (*kalām*) is blameworthy and how much is praise worthy, the conditions wherein it is condemned and these wherein it is praised, as well as the persons who are benefited by it and the persons who are harmed. If you should then say that, since you acknowledge the need for it in refuting [the arguments of] the innovators, and since innovations have now risen and calamities spread, the need for it has become urgent, it is inevitable that undertaking this science should become a *farḍkifāyah*, just as undertaking to safeguard property and other rights and fulfilling the duties of justice and government and the rest. And unless the learned men engage in spreading and teaching this science and in doing researches in it, it will not endure; and if it were completely abandoned, it would surely disappear; nor is there in human nature by itself a sufficient ability to cut through the dubiosities

of innovators unless this subject be learnt and studied. Therefore there should be instruction in it, and its investigation is now one of the *furūḍ al-kifāyāt*, contrary to what it was at the time of the Companions when the need for it was not urgent.

If you should say this, then know that the truth of the matter is that undoubtedly there should be, in every town, someone who would undertake to engage in this science and take it upon himself to refute the dubiosities of the innovators which have spread in that particular town. This undertaking is performed through education, but it is not wise to instruct the laity in it just as they are instructed in jurisprudence and interpretation. For this is like drugs, and jurisprudence is like food : the harm of food is not dangerous but the harm of drugs is dangerous as we have already mentioned.

The learned men of this science should confine their instruction to men who have the three following traits : The first is devotion to knowledge and passion for it ; for the working man is prevented by his work from mastering the subject completely and from dispelling the doubts when they arise. [88] The second trait is sagacity, intelligence, and eloquence, because the stupid one does not benefit by his understanding and the dull one does not gain by his argument. On the contrary such a man is injured by disputation and should not expect any good from it. The third trait is that the man should by nature be good, religious, and pious; he should not be dominated by passions, because the sinful man would stray from religion at the least provocation. Passions

would do away with all deterrents and remove the barrier which stands between him and worldly pleasures. He would not be keen on dispelling anything questionable, but rather would seize upon it to free himself from any obligation (*taklīf*). The things which such a student will spoil would be greater than those which he would reform. When you know these divisions you would realize that, in disputation the praiseworthy argument is of the same kind as the arguments of the Qur'ān: kind words which influence the hearts and convince the minds without going deeply into syllogisms and analyses which most people do not understand; and whenever they understand them they consider them trickeries and artifices which their proponent has learnt in order to make things ambiguous. Should he be confronted by one of his professional colleagues he would resist him.

You will also know that al-Shāfi'ī and all the Fathers were forbidden from engaging in disputation and devoting themselves exclusively to it, because of the harm inherent in it which we have already pointed out. The reports of ibn-'Abbās' debate with the Khārijites and 'Ali's debate concerning free will (*qadar*) [show that their disputation] was of the clear and intelligent kind, carried out at the time of need. Such disputation is praiseworthy under all conditions. Undoubtedly the need for disputation differs with the time; therefore it is not unlikely that the rule which governs it should also differ. This then is the rule of the creed which God imposed on man and the method of defending and preserving it.

As to dispelling doubts, revealing truths, knowing

things as they really are, and comprehending the mysteries (*asrār*) which the words of this creed signify, there is no way to attain any of them except through self-mortification (*mujāhadah*) and the subduing of passions, through seeking God wholeheartedly and persisting in thoughts which are free from the blemishes of disputation. They are a mercy from God which comes to those who expose themselves to its beneficence according to what God ordained to them and the extent to which they had exposed themselves to it as well as the capacity of their hearts and the degree of their purity. This is the sea the depth of which cannot be sounded and the waters of which cannot be traversed.

If you should say that this discourse implies that these sciences have external as well as internal meanings, that some of them are obvious and readily understood, while others are hidden and become evident through self-mortification, discipline, earnest desire, pure thinking and a heart (*sirr*) free from all wordly activities except those which are required, and conclude that such discourse is almost contrary to the Law since the Law does not have external and internal meanings, secret and manifest, but the external and the internal, the secret and the manifest, are in it all the same, then you should know that the division of these sciences into hidden and obvious is not denied by anyone of any insight but is denied by the ignorant who, having acquired some knowledge in their youth, did not advance any further and consequently failed to gain promotion to the lofty heights where lie the stations (*maqāmāt*) of the learned men and the saints.

This is evident from the testimony of the Law as the Prophet said, "Verily there is to the Qur'ān an external meaning and an internal meaning, a scope and a point." 'Ali, pointing to his breast, said, "Verily herein lies abundant knowledge; would that there were some to [comprehend and] transmit it." The Prophet also said, "We prophets were ordered to communicate with everyone according to his ability to understand." And again, "No one has ever recited a tradition to a people which their minds have failed to grasp without being a temptation for them." God said, "These similitudes do We set forth to men: and none understands them except those who know."[1] The Prophet said, "Verily of knowledge is a branch which resembles a hidden thing; no one grasps it save those who know God." And again, "If you only know what I know, you would laugh little and weep much."[2] If this had not been a secret which he was forbidden to divulge because of the inability of the minds to comprehend it, why then did he not explain it to them, especially since they would have certainly believed him if he had done so? In connexion with the interpretation of the words of God, "It is God who hath created seven heavens and as many earths; the [divine] command cometh down among them."[3] ibn-'Abbās said, "Were I to relate its interpretation, you would stone me"—and according to another version, "you would have said, 'He is an unbeliever'." Abu-Hurayrah said, "I have received from the Apostle of God two things, one of which I have made public.

1. *Sūrah* XXIX: 42.
2. Al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd: 9; al-Dārimi, Riqāq: 26; ibn-Mājah, Zuhd: 19.
3. *Sūrah* LXV: 12.

Were I to divulge the other, this throat would be cut." The Prophet said, "Abu-Bakr has excelled you not by excessive fasting and much prayer, but by a secret (*sirr*) which rested in his bosom." [89] No doubt this secret was connected with the foundations of religion and not removed from it. And whatever belonged to the foundations of religion could not have been hid from the other Companions through its outward form. Sahl al-Tustari said, "The learned man possesses three kinds of knowledge: exoteric (*ẓāhir*) which he imparts to the followers of exoteric knowledge; esoteric (*bāṭin*) which he cannot reveal except to its own people; and finally a knowledge which lies between him and His God and which he cannot reveal to anyone." One of the gnostics (sing. *'ārif*) said, "To divulge the secret of Lordship (*rūbūbīyah*) is [equivalent to] unbelief." Some one also said, 'Lordship has a secret, if revealed, prophecy will become obsolete; prophecy has a secret, if divulged, knowledge will become useless; and the learned men of God have a secret, if disclosed, the law will become of no force." If he who had said this did not thereby mean the futility of prophecy as far as the feeble minded are concerned because of their inability to understand, then what he said is not true. Rather, that which is true is free of contradiction. The perfect man is he whose knowledge does not destroy his piety, and the road to piety is through prophecy.

You may say, "These verses and traditions may be subject to several interpretations. Show us, then, how their exoteric meaning differs from the esoteric. For if the exoteric is contradictory to the esoteric, it

will destroy the Law, which is exactly the position of those who say that reality is contrary of the Law. This is sheer unbelief because the Law represents the exoteric and reality represents the esoteric. If the one is neither contradictory to, nor in disagreement with, the other, then both are identical. Therefore the division [of knowledge into obvious and hidden, exoteric and esoteric] is hereby destroyed and the Law will have no secret [meaning] which should not be divulged. Rather both the hidden and the obvious will be the same." If you should so inquire, then you should know that this question raises a grave issue and leads into the science of revelation (*al-mukāshafah*) departing from the intent of the science of practical religion (*al-mu'āmalah*) which is the purpose of these books. For the articles of faith which we have already mentioned come under the works of the heart which we are required to receive with acceptance and consent, by fixing the heart on them and adhering to them, not by endeavouring to comprehend their realities, since this was not required of all people. Were it not a part of practical religion we would not have mentioned it in this book, and were is not one of the outward works of the heart we would not have mentioned it in the first half of the book. Real [and complete] revelation is an attribute of the essence of the heart and its inward part. But if the discussion leads to the stirring up of doubt or the shadow of doubt concerning the contradiction of the exoteric to the esoteric, a brief word of explanation becomes necessary. For he who says that reality disagrees with the Law and the esoteric contradicts the exoteric is closer to unbelief than to belief. In

fact, the secrets whose comprehension is peculiar to the favourites of God (*al-muqarrabūn*) and the practice of which is limited to them and which they do not divulge to the masses may be divided into five categories:

The first is that the thing in itself is subtle and beyond the comprehension of most minds. Consequently its comprehension is restricted to the elite who should not divulge it to those who are unable to grasp it lest, whenever their minds fail to comprehend it or to understand the concealed secrets of the spirit, it becomes a calamity to them. The Apostle himself refrained from explaining this part.[1] The minds fail to comprehend its reality and the imaginations to imagine its truth. But do dot think that this was not revealed to the Apostle of God, for he who does not know the spirit does not know himself, and he who does not know himself does not know his God. It is not unlikely that this was revealed to some of the saints and the learned men although they were not prophets; but they disciplind themselves in the etiquette of the Law and held their peace in the matters where the Apostle himself was silent. In fact there are in the attributes of God many a hidden thing which are beyond the comprehension and understanding of the crowds. Of these, the Apostle of God did not mention anything except those that are obvious to the minds, such as knowledge and power and the like, which men understand in terms of something akin to them and then suppose that they performed the feat through their own knowledge

1. *Cf. Sūrah* XVII : 87 ; al-Bukhāri, Tafsīr Sūrah bani-Isrā'īl : 12.

and power, especially since they possess certain qualities which are called knowledge and power. Consequently they arrive at that by some manner of analogy. But if the Apostle mentioned some of the attributes of God to which men have nothing akin and which do not resemble, even remotely, anything they possess, they would not have understood them. Thus, the pleasure of coition, if mentioned to the child or to the impotent, will not be understood by them except in relation to the pleasure of eating which they comprehend. This understanding, however, will not be one of actual experience. Furthermore, the difference between God's knowledge and power and human knowledge and power is greater than the difference between the pleasure of coition and the pleasure of eating. In short, man does not comprehend except himself and his own attributes which are present with him or were with him in the past. By comparison and analogy with these he understands the attributes of others. He will also realize that there is a difference between his attributes and those of God in noblenessand perfection. Therefore it is not within the power of men but to declare as belonging to God what has been declared as belonging to himself, such as action, knowledge, and power as well as other attributes, and to acknowledge that in the case of God they are more perfect and more noble. Most of his emphasis would, therefore, be [90] on his own attributes rather than on those of majesty which belong exclusively to God. For this reason the Prophet said, "I shall not praise Thee as Thou hast praised Thyself." This does not mean the inability to express what I comprehend but rather an admission

of the inability to comprehend the essence of the majesty of God. For this reason again someone said "No one has truly known God except God Himself." Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq said, "Praise be to God who hath not given men a way to know Him except through their inability to know Him."

Let us now, however, stop this kind of discussion and go back to the main purpose, namely that one of these categories comprises that which the minds fail to comprehend, such as the spirit (*al-rūḥ*) and some of the attributes of God. Perhaps the Prophet referred to something of the same nature when he said, "Verily God hath seventy veils of light. If He would remove them, the majesty of His face would consume every one whose eyes might happen to behold His glory."[1]

The second category of the hidden things which the prophets and the saints decline to mention or divulge comprises those things which are intelligible in themselves and the minds do not fail to grasp, but their mention is harmful to most hearers although it is not harmful to the prophets and the saints. The secret of the decrees of God which the learned men were forbidden to divulge belongs to this part. Consequently it is not unlikely that certain truths may be harmful to some people just as the light of the sun is harmful to the eyes of bats and the rose perfume is harmful to blackbeetles. And how could this be deemed unlikely when we know that our saying that unbelief, adultery, sin, and evil exist all by the will of God, which in itself is true, but, nevertheless, has

1. *Cf.* Ibn-Mājah, Intro. 13; 18-19.

been harmful to many because it was taken by them as an evidence for folly, lack of wisdom, and approval of evil and wickedness? Thus has al-Rāwandi,[1] as well as several separatists, deviated from the right path by following such heresies.

Similarly, if the secret of the decrees of God were divulged most people would fancy that God is lacking in power, because their minds are incapable of comprehending anything which will remove that fancy. Furthermore, if someone should discuss the day of resurrection and should say that it will fall after a thousand years, or a few years after or a few years before, his words would be understood. Nevertheless the appointed time of the day of resurrection was not foretold for the welfare of men and for fear of the harm which might ensue. The [intervening] period may be long and the appointed time very distant, with the result that people, thinking that the day of retribution is remote, would cease to mind or care. On the other hand it may be, in the knowledge of God, close at hand. If then, the appointed time should be foretold, people would be greatly frightened with the result that they would neglect their [daily] work and transactions and havoc would overtake the world. Were this to occur and come true, it

1. Abu-al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥya ibn-Isḥāq, one of the three arch-heretics of Islam, the other two being abu-Ḥayyān al-Tawḥidi and abu-al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri. The date of al-Rāwandi's death is variously given in the sources but most probably he died around A.H. 250/A.D. 864. *Cf. al-Fihrist*, p. 108; al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, ed. and tr. into French by C.B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille (Paris, 1866-77), Vol. VII, p. 237; ibn-Khallikān, Vol. I, pp. 47-48; *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Vol. II, pp. 235-36. For his beliefs see al-Ash'ari, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyin wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallin*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1929-30), pp. 140-41, 149, 159-60, 352, 388, 422-24, 28, 445-46.

would be an example of this category.

The third category is where the thing is such as will be understood and cause no harm when mentioned clearly, although it is usually expressed through metaphor or allegory so that its impression on the heart of the listener may be deeper. Its value is that it leaves a greater impression on the heart. Thus if a person had said that he had seen a man place pearls around the necks of swine and his words were taken metaphorically to express the imparting of knowledge to, and the spread of learning among those who are unworthy, the [ordinary] listener would readily understand its literal meaning while the thorough and careful listener, when he examines and finds that the man had no pearls and wasn ot surround ed by swine, would see through and comprehend the inner and esoteric meaning. Consequently men differ in this respect. An example of this kind of speech is the following:

A weaver and a tailor toil
On either side of Spica Virginis;
The one is weaving shrouds for the dead,
The other fashions swaddling clothes.

The poet expressed the celestial phenomena of the rising (*iqbāl*) of the stars and their setting (*idbār*) metaphorically through the parable of two artisans. This kind of [metaphor] belongs to the principle of expressing a certain meaning through a picture which contains the same meaning or a similar meaning. Belonging to the same kind are the words of the Prophet when he said, "Verily the mosque will shrink when people spit on its courtyard just as the piece of

skin will shrink when it is placed over the fire." You can readily understand that the courtyard of the mosque does not actually shrink when people spit on it. What the words of the Prophet really mean is that the atmosphere of the mosque, being honoured and exalted, has been dishonoured and belittled by spitting, [91] which is as opposed to the idea of the mosque as fire is to the integrity of the particles of skin. Belonging to the same kind are the words of the Prophet when he said, "Is he who raises his head from prostration before the imām not afraid that God will transform his head into that of a donkey?"[1] This, however, will never take place literally but only metaphorically since the head of the donkey is proverbial, not for its form and shape, but for its characteristic stupidity and foolishness. Thus, whoever would raise his head from prostration before the imām, his head would become like that of a donkey in stupidity and foolishness. It is this which is meant and not the shape which the literal meaning [of the words] indicates. For it is utterly foolish to place following [the imām] and preceding [him] together because they are contradictory. The knowledge that, in such cases, there are inner meanings which differ from the outward significations, can only be determined by either rational or legal evidence. The rational is when any interpretation according to the outward meaning is impossible, as in the words of the Prophet when he said, "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful [God]." When we examine

1. Al-Dārimi, Ṣalāh, : 72 ; al-Tirmidhi. Jum'ah : 56.

the hearts of the believers we shall not find them surrounded with fingers, and consequently we shall know that the words are used metaphorically for power which is inherent in figures and constitutes their hidden life. Furthermore, power was metaphorically represented by the fingers because such a metaphor conveys the idea of power more completely. Of the same kind is the instance where God expresses the idea of His power metaphorically by saying, "Our words to a thing when We will it is but to say, 'Be,' and it is"[1] The outward meaning of this verse is not possible because if the saying of God 'Be' was addressed to the thing before that thing came into existence, then it would simply be an impossibility since the non-existent does not understand address and, therefore, cannot obey. And if it was addressed to the thing after the thing has come into existence, then it would be superfluous, since the thing is already in existence and does not need to be brought into being. But whereas this metaphor has been more impressive upon the minds in conveying the idea of the greatest power, recourse has been made to it.

Those cases where the inner meaning is determined by means of legal evidence are the cases which can be interpreted according to their literal and outward signification, but, on the authority of tradition, a meaning other than the outward was intended, as is the case in the interpretation of the words of God when he said, "He sendeth down the water from Heaven: then flow the torrents in their due measure,

1. *Sūrah* XVI ; 42.

and the flood beareth along a swelling foam."[1] Here the word water stands for the Qur'ān which the torrents represent the hearts. Some of the hearts receive and hold much; others receive much and hold little; while others still receive much and hold nothing at all. The foam represents unbelief and hypocrisy, which, although it rises to and floats upon the surface of the water, does not last; but guidance which benefits men, endures. Into this part a group of men went deeply and interpreted the things which were mentioned in connexion with the hereafter, such as the balance (*al-mizān*), the bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), and the like. All this, however, is innovation because it was not handed down by tradition, especially since its literal and outward interpretation is not impossible. Therefore it should be interpreted literally.

The fourth category is where man comprehends the thing in a general way and then through further investigation and experimentation, he understands its particulars so that it becomes a part of him. Thus the two kinds of knowledge differ. The first, (i.e. the general) resembles the husks, while the second (i.e. the particular), resembles the pith. The first is the exoteric or outward, the second is the esoteric or inward. This is just like the example of the man who sees a person in the dark or from a distance and acquires a certain picture of that person. But when he sees him from a close range or after the darkness is gone, he realizes certain differences [between this second picture and the first]. This last picture, however, is not opposed to the first but complementary

1. *Sūrah* XIII : 18.

to it. The same is true of knowledge, faith, and belief. For a man may believe in the existence of love, sickness, and death even before any of them occur. But to believe in their existence after they have taken place is more complete than believing in their existence before they take place. In fact man has, with regard to passion and love as well as the other conditions, three different stages and three distinct degrees of comprehension. The first is to believe in the existence of the thing before it takes place; the second is to believe in its existence at the time of its occurrence; and third is to believe in its existence after it has taken place. To recognize the existence of hunger after it is gone is different from recognizing its existence before it is gone. Similarly, there are some of the sciences of religion which mature by experience and their mature state as compared with their premature state is like the esoteric as compared to the exoteric. Hence there is a difference between the sick man's knowledge of health and the healthy man's knowledge of it. In short, men differ in these four parts; yet in none of them is there an esoteric meaning which contradicts the exoteric. Rather the exoteric meaning completes and perfects the exoteric just as the pith completes the husk.

The fifth category is where concrete words are used figuratively. The feeble-minded will regard the literal and exoteric meaning sensible and will not go beyond it; but the man who has an insight for realities will comprehend the secret it contains. This is like the words of him who said, "The wall said to

the peg, 'why do you split me?' The peg replied, ['How do I know?]. As him who is hitting me and does not let me go. Go see the mallet which is behind me'." This is, undoubtedly, figurative. Of the same kind are the following words of God, "Then He applied Himself to the Heaven, which was then but smoke: and to it and to the Earth He said, 'Come ye, whether in obedience or against your will? And they both said, 'We come obedient'."[1] The stupid one, because of his lack of understanding, would assume that both the Heaven and the earth possess life, intellect, and the ability to understand speech. He would also assume that they were addressed by a speech of actually enunciated words which both could heart and reply to with enunciated words saying, "We come obedient." But he who has insight would realise that this was a figurative [use of language], and that God only expressed the idea that the Heaven and earth are subject to His will. Of the same kind, too, are the words of God when He said, "Neither is there aught which does not celebrate His praise."[2] The stupid one, because of his lack of understanding, would assume that the inanimate things possess life, intellect, and the ability to speak and enunciate words, so that they would have to say, "Praise be to God" in order that His praise might be established. [92] But he who has insight would know that no actual utterance with the tongue was meant by that, but merely that everything, through his own existence, praises God, and in its own essence sanctifies Him and attests to His unity. As has been said:

1. *Sūrah* XLI: 10. 2. *Sūrah* XVII: 46.

In everything He has a song
Which declares that He is one.[1]

In the same way it is said, "This masterpiece testifies that its maker possesses fair ability and perfect knowledge." This does not mean that the masterpiece actually utters the words, "I testify . . ." etc. but merely that, through its form and state, [it testifies to the ability and knowledge of its maker]. Similarly everything does, in itself, stand in need of a creator to create and sustain it, to maintain its attributes and to move it to and fro in its different states. And through its need it testifies to its Maker by hallowing Him. Such a witness is comprehended by those who have insight, not those who stand still and venture not beyond externals. For this reason God said, "But their utterances of praise ye understand not."[2] The feeble minded do not understand this at all, while the favourites of God and the versatile learned men do not understand it perfectly because everything hallows God and praises Him in many ways and each comprehends according to his intellect and insight. The enumeration of these witnesses is not becoming under the science of practical religion. In this part too those who cling to externals differ from those who have insight, and in it the disagreement between the esoteric and the exoteric becomes evident. In this connexion people are either extremists or followers of the middle-road. As extremists, some have gone so far in the [allegorical] interpretation of

1. The verse is by abu-Tammām, the great poet and anthologist; d. A.H. 231/A.D. 845-46. See *al-Aghāni*, Vol. XV, pp. 100-108; ibn-Khallikān, Vol. I, pp. 214-18.

2. *Sūrah* XVII : 46.

words that they have explained away all or most of their outward and literal meaning. They have taken the words of God, "Yet shall their hands speak unto us and their feet shall bear witness,"[1] as well as, "And they shall say to their skin, 'Why witness ye against us?' They shall say, 'God who giveth a voice to all things, hath given us voice',"[2] and the conversation which takes place between Munkar and Nakīr, and in the balance (*al-mīzān*), the bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), and the judgment day together with the debate between the people of Hell and the people of Heaven when [the former] said, "Pour upon us some water, or of the refreshments God hath given you," and claimed that all this was figurative. On the other hand some went to the opposite extreme and forbade [any but the literal interpretation]. Among those was Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal who went as far as to forbid the allegorical interpretation of the words of God "'Be', and it is."[3] [His followers] have claimed that these words were words of actual speech with enunciated letters and sounds brought into existence by God every moment He created a created thing. I have even heard one of his followers say that [Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal] forbade the allegorical interpretation of all but three traditions, namely the words of the Prophet when he said, "The Black Stone (*al-Ḥajar al-Aswad*) is the right hand of God in the earth;" and, "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful [God];" and "Verily I shall find the soul of the Merciful [God coming] from the direction of al-Yaman." [Even here] the literalists have been

1. *Sūrah* XXXVI: 65. 2. *Sūrah* XLI: 20. 3. *Sūrah* XVI: 42.

inclined to forbid any allegorical interpretation. It is assumed, however, that Aḥmad ibn-Hanbal knew that ascending (*istiwā'*) is not fixity of location (*istiqrār*), and descending (*nuzūl*) is not change of location (*intiqāl*); nevertheless he forbade allegorical interpretation for the good and welfare of people, since whenever it is allowed matters become worse and go out of control, overstepping the limits of moderation. Things which go beyond the limits of moderation are beyond control. Therefore there is no harm done by such a prohibition which is also attested by the lives of the Fathers who used to say, [when discussing verses and traditions], "Take them literally as they have been [revealed and] handed down." Thus Mālik, on being asked about ascending (*istiwā'*), went so far as to say, "The fact of ascending (*istiwā'*) is known but its manner is not; to believe in it is an obligation, to inquire about its manner is a heresy."

Another group advocated the middle of the road position and permitted allegorical interpretation in everything which relates to the attributes of God but have taken the things which pertain to the hereafter in a literal sense and forbade their allegorical interpretation. The advocates of this position are the Ash'arites.[1] The Mu'tazilites go further.[2] They explain away the possibility of seeing God and His being possessed of hearing and sight. They also ex-

1. The system of Muslim orthodoxy developed by abu al.Ḥasan 'Ali al.Ash'ari and hence the name. Al-Ash'ari died around A.H. 330/ A.D. 941-42. For his life and works *al-Fihrist*, p. 181; ibn-Khallikan, Vol. I, pp. 586-87. For his system see al-Shahrastani, pp. 65-75.

2. *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyin*, pp. 155-278.

plain away the ascension (*al-mi'rāj*) of the Prophet and claim that it had not taken place bodily, the punishment of the grave, the balance, the bridge, and other escatological representations. Nevertheless they confess the resurrection of the body, Paradise with its food, perfume, and sex as well as other sensual pleasures, and Hell with burning fire which scorch the skin and melt the fat.

The philosophers go still further. They interpret all eschatological representations as allegories denoting mental and spiritual pain, and mental and spiritual delight. They deny the resurrection of the body but believe in the immortality of the soul and that it will be punished or made happy by punishment and delight of non-sensual nature. They are extremists.

The true middle-road between this complete allegorism and the rigidity of the Ḥanbalites is subtle and obscure. It is found only by those who enjoy divine guidance and comprehend things by the aid of divine light, not by hearsay. Then when the mysteries of things are revealed to them, so that they see them as they are, they go back to [the Qur'ān] and traditions and their wording; whatever agrees with what they see with the light of certainty they affirm, and whatever disagrees with it they interpret allegorically.

But he who bases his knowledge of these things on mere hearsay will thereby fail to secure a firm foothold or gain a well-defined position therein. Such a man who confines himself to mere hearsay would do better to follow the position of Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal.

But a closer examination and definition of the middle-road position in these things belongs to the vast subject of revelation which we must leave aside. Our aim [93] was only to make clear that the esoteric and exoteric may be in harmony with one another and that no disagreement exists between them. At any rate many things have been unfolded through [our discussion] of these five parts. It is our opinion that for the common people the explanation of the creed which we have already given is sufficient for them and that nothing further will be required of them in the first degree [where they stand]. But if any fear of disturbances arises on account of the spread of heresies, then, in the second degree, recourse may be had to a [statement of the] creed wherein a brief and undetailed outline of the obvious proofs is presented. We shall, therefore, present these obvious proofs in this book and shall confine ourselves therein to what we have issued to the people of Jerusalem, entitled *al-Risālah al-Qudsīyah fi Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* (*The Jerusalem Epistle on the Foundations of the Articles of Faith*) and contained in the third section of this book.

## SECTION III

*The Third Section of the Book on the Foundations of the Articles of Faith:*

*On the Obvious Proofs for the Creed Written in Jerusalem*

We say—In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God who distinguished the community of the faithful with the lights of certainty and favoured the people of truth by guiding them to the bulwarks of faith; who saved them from the errors of the unrighteous and the wickedness of the unbelievers, and with His grace led them to follow the example of the chief Apostle; who directed their footsteps in the way of the honoured Companions of the Apostle and enabled them to emulate the righteous Fathers, so that they protected themselves against the dictates of [sheer] reason with the strong cord [of God], and against the lives and beliefs of the ancients with the clear beaten track [of the Fathers], combining thereby the products of reason and the ordinances of the traditional Law. Furthermore they found out that mere verbal repetition of the words "There is no god but God; Muḥammad the Apostle of God" is of no avail unless they completely understand what fundamental principles the words of the witness involve. They also have known that the two words of the witness, despite their brevity, contain an affirmation of the

existence of God Himself, His attributes, and His works, as well as an affirmation of the truthfulness of the Apostle. They have also known that faith is founded upon four pillars (sing. *rukn*) each of which involves ten principles (sing. *aṣl*).

The first pillar (*rukn*) is the knowledge of the essence of God and involves ten principles (sing. *aṣl*). They are the knowledge that God exists and that He is ancient and subsisting; that He is neither substance nor body nor accident; that He is not limited by direction (*jihah*) nor fixed in location; that He is seen and that He is one.

The second pillar treats of the attributes of God and comprises ten principles. They are the knowledge that He is living, knowing, powerful, willing, possessed of hearing, seeing, and speaking; that He is removed from being a substratum for originated properties or a locus of phenomena; and that His words, knowledge and will are ancient and eternal.

The third pillar pertains to the works of God and involves ten principles. They are: that men's actions are created and willed by God and acquired by men; that God has been gracious to create and to invent; that He is free to impose unbearable obligations and to punish the innocent, while taking into consideration that which is salutary (*al-aṣlaḥ*) is not obligatory upon Him; that there is nothing obligatory except by Law; that the sending of prophets is possible and the prophecy of our Prophet Muḥammad is true, being confirmed by miracles.

The fourth pillar is on the things accepted on

authority (*sam'iyāt*) and involves ten principles. They are the affiramation of the day of resurrection and the day of judgment, the inquisition [of the dead by] Munkar and Nakīr, the torment of the grave, the balance, the bridge, the creation of Paradise and Hell, the nature of the imāmate, that the excellence of the Companions is in accordance with the chronological order, the qualifications of the imāmate, and that even though piety and knowledge are not possible to obtain [in the incumbent], his imāmate is considered legitimate and binding.

The first among the pillars of belief is the knowledge of the essence of God and that He is one and it involves ten principles.

The first principle is the knowledge of the existence of God. The first light which should be used for illumination and the first thing to be followed on the road of admonition are the instructions of the Qur'ān, since no explanation is better than that of God. Thus He said, "Have We not made the Earth a couch? And the Mountains its tent-stakes? We have created you of two sexes, and ordained you sleep for rest, the night as a mantle, and the day for gaining livelihood. We built above you seven solid heavens, and placed therein a burning lamp; and we sent down waters in abundance from the rain-clouds, that we might bring forth by it corn and herbs, and gardens thick with trees."[1] And again, "Assuredly in the creation of the Heaven and of the Earth; and in the alternation of night and day; and in the ships which pass through the sea with what is useful to man; and

1. *Sūrah* LXXVIII: 6-16.

in the rain which God sendeth down from Heaven, giving life by it to the earth after its death, and by scattering over it all kinds of cattle; and in the change of the winds, and in the clouds that are made to do service between the Heaven and the Earth;—are signs for those who understand."[1] He also said, "See ye not how God hath created the seven heavens one over the other? And he hath placed therein the moon as a light, and hath placed there the sun as a torch; and God hath caused you to spring forth from the earth like a plant; hereafter He will turn you back into it again, and will bring you forth anew."[2] And again, "What think ye? The germ of life—is it ye who created them? or we their creator? Is it we who have decreed that death should be among you; yet are we not thereby hindered from replacing you with others, your likes, or from producing you again in a form which ye know not. Ye have known the first creation: will ye not then reflect? What think ye? That which ye saw—. Is it ye who cause its upgrowth, or do we cause it to spring forth? If we pleased we could so make your harvest dry and brittle that ye would ever marvel (and say), 'Truly we have been at cost, yet we are forbidden harvest.' What think ye of the water ye drink? Is it ye who send it down from the clouds, or send we it down? Brackish could we make is, if we pleased: Will ye not then be thankful? What think ye? The fire which ye obtain by friction—is it ye who rear its tree, or do we rear it? It is we who have made it a memorial and a benefit to the wayfarers of the des- ."[3] Anyone with the least traces of brain

1. *Sûrah* ·· 159. 2. *Sûrah* LXXI: 14-17. 3. *Sûrah* LVI; 58-72.

in his head will, upon reflecting upon the import of these verses and examining the wonders of God's handiwork, in Heaven and on earth as well as the beauties of nature in animal and plant, realizes that this wonderful [universe] with its consummate order requires a creator to direct it and a maker to govern it and watch it over. Human nature, in tact, testifies that it is subject to the will of God and governed in accordance with His law. For this reason God said, "Is there any doubt concerning God, maker of the Heavens and of the Earth?"[1] [94] [The prophets were, therefore, sent in order to call men to manotheism, that they may say, "There is no god but God." They were not, however, commanded to say, We have a god and the world has another," because such a thing is inborn in their minds from the time of their birth. For this reason God said, "If thou ask them who hath created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly reply 'God'."[2] And again, "Set thou thy face then, as a true convert (*ḥanīf*), towards the faith which God hath made, the native [religion] whereon God constituted man."[3] Therefore there is in human nature and the testimonies of the Qur'ān what will render the task of citing proofs unnecessary. Nevertheless, by way of preparation and following the example of the learned theologians, we say:

One of the accepted axioms of the mind is that an originated phenomenon cannot come into existence without a cause. Since the world is an originated phenomenon, it cannot, come into existence wit out a cause. That originated phenomena cannot con into

1. *Sūrah* XIV : 11. 2. *Sūrah* XXXI : 24. 3. *Sūrah* XX X : 29:

existence without a cause, is obvious. For every originated phenomenon belongs to a certain definite time the precedence or the subsequence of which may be assumed. Its being definite in time and distinct from what preceded it and what succeeded it, will naturally require one who renders things definite [in time]. As to one saying that the world is an originated phenomenon, its proof is found in the fact that bodies are not independent of motion and rest. Both states are originated phenomena; and whatever is not independent of originated things is itself originated. The proof comprises three assertions of claims.

The first is that bodies are not independent of motion and rest. This is readily understood and requires neither meditation nor thinking, for he who conceives of a body in neither the kinetic state nor in the static state is both ignorant and foolish.

The second assertion is our saying that both motion and rest are originated phenomena, the proof of which is found in the alternation and in the appearance of the one after the other is gone. This is true of all bodies, those that have been seen as well as those that have not been seen. For there is not a static object the potential motion of which is not required by the mind, and there is no moving object the potential rest of which is not required by the mind. The novel (*ḥāri'*) is originated because of itsemergence and the anterior (*sābiq*), because of its extinction (*'adam*), since if its eternity (*qidam*) were established its extinction would have become impossible, as we shall show and prove in establishing the subsistence (*baqā'*) of the Maker.

The third assertion is our statement that whatever is not independent of originated things is itself originated. Its proof lies in the fact that if it were not so, then there would be, before every originated phenomenon, other originated phenomena which have no beginning; and unless these originated phenomena come to nought in their entirety, the turn for the present originated phenomena to come into being immediately would never arrive. But it is impossible for that which has no end to come to nought. Furthermore if the celestial spheres have revolutions, the numbers of which have no end, it is inevitable that their numbers be either odd or even, or both odd and even, or neither odd nor even. But it is impossible that their numbers be both odd and even at the same time, or neither odd nor even for this would be a combination of both the negative and the affirmative, since in the affirmation of the one is the negation of the other, and in the negation of the one is the affirmation of the other.

Furthermore they cannot possibly be even because the even number becomes odd with the addition of one; and how could that which has no end be wanting one? Nor can they possibly be odd because the odd number becomes even with the addition of one; and how could it be wanting one when its number has no end? (Again they cannot possibly be neither odd nor even for this will mean that they have an end).[1] Therefore the conclusion is that the world is not independent of originated phenomena, and that which is not independent of originated phenomena is itself

1. Words in brackets are in 'C' only.

originated. And when its being an originated phenomena has been established, its need for an originator becomes axiomatic.

The second principle is the knowledge that God is ancient (*qadīm*) from eternity (*azali*). He has no beginning, but He is the beginning of everything and before anything living or dead. The proof of this is found in supposing that if God were originated and not ancient, He would have been in need of an originator Himself. In turn His originator would also need an originator and so on to infinity. And that which goes on and on endlessly will never reach an ancient originator which is the first cause. This is the required thing which we have called the Maker of the world and its Creator and Fashioner.

The third principle is the knowledge that God, besides being without beginning, is also everlasting without end. He is the first and the last, the visible and the invisible, since that of which the eternity is established its coming to an end is impossible. Its proof lies in the realization that if it came to nought it is inevitable that it should come to nought either by itself or through an opposing annihilating agency. And if it were possible for a thing, which is conceived of as self-subsisting, to come to nought, it will be possible for a thing, which is conceived of as self-annihilating, to come into being. And just as the sudden emergence (*ṭarayān*) of existence requires a cause (*sabab*), so does the emergence of extinction require a cause. That it will come to nought through an opposing annihilating agency is false, because if thatannihilatingagencywereancient(*qadīm*),existence

side by side with it would be inconceivable. But we have learnt in the two previous principles of the existence and eternity of God. How then did He exist in eternity with His opposite? If, however, the opposing annihilating agency were an originated phenomenon, its existence from eternity would be impossible because for the originated phenomenon to oppose the ancient and destroy its existence is less likely than the ancient to oppose the originated and prevent its existence. In fact prevention (*daf'*) is easier than destruction while the ancient is stronger and more pre-eminent than the originated.

The fourth principle is that God is not a substance which can be isolated. Rather He transcends everything which resembles isolation. The proof of this lies in the fact that every substance which is definite (*mutaḥayyiz*), is limited by its own place and is inevitably either quiescent in it or moving away from it. Therefore it is not independent of motion or quiescence. But both these are originated, and that which is not independent of originated phenomena is itself originated.

If an ancient definite substance were conceivable the eternity of the substances of the world would have been reasonable. And if a person should use the term substance [for God] and not mean thereby a definite substance, he would be mistaken [95] as far as the use of the term is concerned, not as far as the meaning for which he had used it.

The fifth principle is that God is not a body (*jism*) composed of different substances, since the body is that which is composed of substances. When

His being a substance limited by place is refuted, His being a body is also refuted, because every body is limited by place and is composed of substances. But it is impossible for the substance to be free from division, composition, motion, quiescence, form, and quantity, all of which are characteristic of originated phenomena. And if it were possible to believe that the Maker of the world is a body, it would also be possible to believe in the Divinity of the sun and the moon as well as other heavenly bodies. If, therefore, one should dare and call God a body but not mean thereby a composition of substances, he would be wrong as far as the name is concerned, but not in negating the idea of body.

The sixth principle is the knowledge that God is not an accident (*'araḍ*) subsisting in a body or existing in a substratum; because an accident is that which exists in a body. But every body is inevitably originated and as such its originator exists before it. How then could [God] exist in a body when He has existent in eternity alone, with no other besides Himself, and then originated the bodies and the accidents after Himself. [Again how could He exist in a body] when He is a knowing, and able, and willing Creator as shall be discussed later. It is impossible for these attributes to exist in accidents. On the contrary they are impossible except in a self-existing and self-sufficient being. The conclusion derived from these principles is that [God] is a self-existing being, neither substance, nor body, nor accident; that the whole world is made of substances, accidents, and bodies, and consequently He resembles

nothing and nothing resembles Him. He is the living, the subsisting, there is none like unto Him. For how could the created resemble its creator, the ordained he who ordained it, and the fashioned, he who fashioned it. All bodies and accidents were created and made by Him; hence it is impossible that they be like unto Him or [in any way] resemble Him.

The seventh principle is the knowledge that God is removed from being limited by any direction because a direction is either above or below, right or left, before or behind. All these He had created and originated through the creation of man whom he made with two extremities, the one rests on the earth and comprises his feet, while the opposite extremity is his head. Consequently the term above was originated to indicate the direction of the head and the term below, the direction of the feet. This is true even of the ant which creeps on the ceiling with the result that the directions, in relation to it, are reversed—what we consider above is to it below, and what we consider below is to it above. Similarly man was created with two hands, the one usually stronger than the other. The term right was therefore originated to indicate the direction of the stronger hand and the term left to indicate the opposite direction. Consequently the right hand side is called the right and the opposite direction thereof is called the left. Man was also created with two [other] directions from one of which he sees and toward which he moves. Consequently the term before was originated to designate the direction toward which he moves, while the term behind was originated to

designate the opposition.

Therefore the directions are originated through the creation of man; and had he not been created along these lines, but rather created round like a sphere, these directions would never have existed. How then could God have been limited by any direction in eternity when every direction is originated. Or how could He have become limited by any direction when He never had any direction above Him when He created man; for that will mean that He has a head, since above designates the direction above the head. But God is too exalted [above His creatures] to have a head [like their heads]. Again how could He have become limited by any direction when He never had any direction below Him when he created man; for that will mean that He has feet, since below designates the direction below the feet. But God is too exalted [above His creatures] to have feet [like their feet]. All this is impossible [to imagine] in the mind. For whatever the mind conceives is definite is so far as it is limited by place, in the same way as substances are limited, or by substances, in the same way as accidents are. But the impossibility of His being a substance or an accident has been established; consequently His being limited by direction becomes impossible.

If therefore anything else is meant by the term direction other than these two meanings then the usage will be wrong in terminology and signification; because if God were above the world He would be opposite to it, and everything which is opposite to a body is either equal to it in size, or smaller or larger.

All this implies measurement which necessarily requires an object or measurement. But God the One Creator and Ruler of the world is too exalted above such things.

As to the raising of hands heavenward at the time of petition it is because Heaven is the direction of supplication and implies a description of the one to whom the supplications are offered, such as majesty and grandeur, employing thereby the direction of height to represent the quality of glory and exaltation. For God is above in all dominion and power.

The eighth principle is that God is seated upon the throne in the sense which He willed by that state of equilibrium—a state which is not inconsistent with the quality of grandeur and to which the symptoms of origination and annihilation do not permeate. It is exactly what has been mean by the ascension to Heaven in the Qur'ān when God said, "Then He ascended to Heaven and it was but smoke."[1] This is only through dominion and power, as the poet[2] said,

"Bishr[3] has gained dominion over al-'Irāq,
With neither sword nor shedding of blood."[4]

Thus were the people of truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) compelled to pursue such a figurative and allegorical interpreta-

1. *Sūrah* XLI : 10.

2. The poet is the famous al-Akhṭal, Ghiyāth ibn-Ghawth, *ca* A.H. 95/A.D. 714. See *al-Aghāni*, Vol. VII, pp. 169-188; ibn Qutaybah, *al-Shi'r wa-al-Shu'arā* ed. M. J. de Geoje. (Leyden, 1902-4), pp. 301-12; *Shi'r al-Akhṭal*, ed, A Salhāni (Beirut, 1891), pp. 333-400.

3. Ibn-Marwān ibn-al-Ḥakam, Umayyad governor of al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah; *ca* A.H. 75 A D 695. See Ibn-Qutaybah, *al-Ma'ārif*, p. 180; al-Ṭabarī, Vol. II, p. 852; *Shadharāt al Dhahab*, Vol. I, p. 83.

4. *Shi'r al-Akhṭal*, p. 390.

tion just as the esoterics (*ahl al-bāṭin*) were compelled to interpret the words of God, "And wherever ye are, He is with you."[1] This has been taken, [96] by agreement, to mean thorough comprehension and knowledge just as the words of the Prophet, "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful [God]", have been taken to mean might and power, while his words, "The Black Stone is the right hand of God in the earth," have been taken to mean veneration and honour, because if they were taken literally, the result would have been impossible. Similarly the sitting of God upon the throne, if it were left to mean fixity of location and stability, would necessitate that He who is seated upon the throne be a body in contact with the throne, and be either equal to it in size, or larger or smaller. But all this is impossible, and what leads to the impossible is itself impossible.

The ninth principle is that God, although removed from form and quantity and unlimited by directions and climes, is nevertheless seen with the eyes in the hereafter, the everlasting abode. For He said, "On that day shall faces beam with light, outlooking towards their Lord."[2] But He cannot be seen in this world according to His words, "No vision taketh Him, but He taketh in all vision",[3] and according to His words in His conversation with Moses saying, "Thou shalt not see Me."[4] Would that I knew how the Mu'tazilites knew the attributes of God that Moses himself did not know; or how Moses asked to see

1. *Sūrah* LVII : 4.
2. *Sūrah* LXXV : 22-33.
3. *Sūrah* VI : 103.
4. *Sūrah* VII : 139.

God[1] when seeing Him was impossible. Ignorance is more likely to be rampant among heretics and sectarians than among the prophets.

The acceptance of the verse [which speaks] of seeing [God][2] literally [is justified] because it does not lead to anything impossible. For sight (*ru'yah*) is a kind of revelation and knowledge, although it is more complete and clearer than knowledge. And if it is possible to know God without reference to distance or direction (*jihah*) is also possible to see Him with reference to distance or direction. And just as it is possible for God to see men without confrontation, it is possible for men to see Him without confrontation; and just as it is possible to know Him without modality or form, it is possible to see Him likewise.

The tenth principle is the knowledge that God is one without any associate, single without any like. He is separate in creating and innovating; He is alone in bringing into existence and inventing. There are none like Him to rival or equal Him, and none opposite Him to contest or contend with Him. The proof of this is found in the words of God when He said, "Had there been in either [Heaven or earth] gods besides God both surely would have gone to ruin."[3] This will be readily illustrated [by the fact] that had there been two gods and the first of them willed a certain thing, the second, if he were under compulsion to aid the first, would be a subordinate and impotent being rather than an almighty god; and if the second

1. *Sūrah* VII : 139.
2. *Sūrah* LXXV : 22-23.
3. *Sūrah* XXI : 22.

were able to contradict and oppose the first, he would be a powerful and dominating being while the first would be weak and impotent rather than an almighty god.

### *The Second Pillar Concerning the Attributes of God, Involving Ten Principles.*

The first principle is the knowledge that the Maker of the world is almighty and that, in His words, "He hath power over all things,"[1] He is truthful, because the world is perfect in its making and orderly in its composition. For he who would see a garment of silk, fine in its weave and texture, symmetrical in its embroidery and ornamentation, and would imagine that it was woven by a dead man that has no life, or by a helpless man that has no power, would be completely lacking in intellect and utterly foolish and ignorant.

The second principle is the knowledge that God is omniscient knowing all things and comprehending all things; nothing in Heaven or on earth is ever hid from His knowledge. He is truthful when He says, "And He knoweth all things."[2] Furthermore evidence of His truthfulness is found in His words when He said, "What! Shall He not know who hath created? For He is the Subtle, the Cognizant."[3] He has led you, through His creation, to arrive at the knowledge that you cannot doubt the evidence which this intricate and orderly creation, even in insignificant and meagre things, offers to the knowledge of the Maker of how to bring order and how to arrange. And what God Himself said is the last word in guidance and in

1. *Sūrah* V : 120. 2. *Sūrah* II : 27. 3. *Sūrah* LXXVII : 14.

revealing knowledge.

The third principle is the knowledge that God is living, because he whose knowledge and power are established, his being possessed of life will, of necessity, become established. If it is possible to conceive of the existence of an able, knowing, doing and ruling being yet lifeless, it will be possible to doubt the life of animals, despite their movements, as well as the life of all craftsmen and artisans, all of which is utter ignorance and error.

The fourth principle is the knowledge that God is willing. He wills all His works and nothing exists which does not depend upon, and proceed from His will. He is the Creator, the Restorer, the Doer of whatsoever He wills. And how could He not be a willer when, in everything which has proceeded from Him, He could have willed its opposite; and wherever there is no opposite He could have caused the same thing to proceed from Himself before or after the time in which it has proceeded. His power is equal to coping with both opposites and both times in the same way. Therefore, it is necessary that there should be a will which directs His power to one or the other possible thing. And if knowledge would, in specifying the thing known, render the will needless, so that it could be said that a thing has come into being at a time when its existence had already been known, it would be possible for knowledge to render power needless, so that it could be said that a thing has come into being without [ the instrumentality of] power, but simply because its existence had already been known.

The fifth principle is the knowledge that God is hearing and seeing. Neither the cogitations of the innermost heart nor the secret thoughts and reflections are hid from His sight; the sound of the creeping of the black ant upon the solid rock in the darkest night is not beyond His hearing. And how could He not see and hear when seeing and hearing are [attributes of] perfection not of defect? Could the created be more perfect than the creator, the thing made more magnificent and more complete than the maker? [97] Or how could they ever be equal, no matter how much He might diminish in perfection while His creation and handiwork increase therein? And again how could the argument of Abraham against his father, who ignorantly and erroneously worshipped idols, be sound? Abraham addressed his father saying, "Why dost thou worship that which neither seeth nor heareth nor availeth thee aught?"[1] But if these defects which characterized the idols of his father characterized his god as well, his argument would have been invalid and his evidence worthless, and the words of God, "This is Our argument which We furnished Abraham against His people,"[2] would have been false. And just at is has been possible for the mind to conceive of His being a doer, although He has none of the physical senses, and knowing, although He has neither heart nor brain, so it is possible to conceive of Him as seeing, although He has no eyeballs, and hearing, although He has no ears, for all cases are the same.

The sixth principle is that God speaks with a

1. *Sūrah* XIX : 42. 2. *Sūrah* XI 83.

speech which is a self-existing attribute. It is neither a sound nor a letter; it does not resemble the speech of other beings, just as His existence does not resemble theirs. In reality genuine speech is the speech of the soul although sounds were built into words merely as symbols, just as gestures and signals are often used to represent the same thing. How then has this fact not been known by a group of ignorant people while it has been known by ignorant poets. Said their spokesman:

"Genuine speech is that of the heart;
Our words are its outward expression."

As to him whose intellect does neither deter nor restrain him from saying that his tongue is an originated thing, but what originates in it by means of his originated power is ancient, [you have no reason to expect that he will ever be sane again, and, therefore, shun all discussion with him. Similarly pay no attention to him who does not understand that the ancient (*qadīm*) is that thing before which nothing existed. (Thus in the words "*bism-Allāh*" the *b* precedes the *s* and consequently the *s* cannot be ancient). For God has a secret [ reason ] for leading some men astray; "And whom God causeth to err, none shall guide."[1] As to him who deems it improbable that Moses could have, in this world, heard a speech which was neither sound nor phone, let him deny that in the hereafter he could see a being who has neither body nor colour. But if it has been possible to conceive of seeing that which has no colour, or body, or size or quantity, while until now nothing else has been seen,

1. *Sūrah* XIII : 33.

the same thing would be possible in the case of hearing, just as it has been in the case of seeing. And if it has been possible to conceive of God as having one knowledge, which is the knowledge of all existent things, it would also be possible to conceive of Him as having one attribute, which is a speech comprising all that He has represented with words. And if it has been possible to conceive of the existence of the Seven Heavens, and Paradise and Hell, written all on a small piece of paper and preserved in a minute part of the heart, and seen with a part of the eyeball not exceeding the size of a lentil seed, without the Heavens and Earth, Paradise and Hell actually existing in the eyeball, or the heart, or the paper, it would also be possible to conceive of the speech of God as being read with tongues, preserved in the hearts, and written in books, without the actual existence of that speech in these things. For if the very speech [ of God ] should actually exist on the leaves of a book, God Himself, through the writing of His name on these leaves, would exist actually thereon. Similarly the very fire of Hell, through the writing of its name on the leaves, would exist actually thereon and [ the leaves ] would be consumed.

The seventh principle is that the self-existing speech [of God], as well as His other attributes, is ancient from eternity, since it is impossible that He be a substratum for originated phenomena and subject to change. On the contrary His attributes demand the same external nature which His essence demands. Change does not overtake Him and mishaps do not befall Him. Nay, He does not cease, in His eternal

nature, to be described with the commendable attributes, and in His everlasting nature, to be far removed from change. For whatever is a substratum for originated phenomena is not free therefrom, and whatever is not free from originated phenomena is itself originated. The description of bodies with the epithet of origination was established because of the fact that they are subject to change and variation in properties. How, then, could their Creator share with them [ the property of ] accepting change.

We conclude from this that the speech of God is ancient from eternity and self-existing. Only the sounds which represent it are originated. For just as it is possible to conceive that a child's desire for learning and his wish for it are existent in the personality of the father before the child is born—so that when he is born and attains maturity, having been given by God [a predilection for that] knowledge which is related to the father's desire, he becomes bound by that same desire which existed in the personality of his father and persisted until he has acquired the knowledge related to it—it is likewise possible to conceive that the divine command, which the words "Take off thy shoes"[1] represent, has existed in the personality of God [from the beginning], and that these words were addressed to Moses after he was born, having been given by God [the predilection for] their knowledge and an ability to hear that ancient speech [of God].

The eighth principle is that His knowledge is ancient. He has not ceased to know Himself and His

1. *Sūrah* XX : 12.

attributes, as well as everything which He creates. Everything which He creates is not novel to Him, rather it comes into being with His eternal knowledge. Thus if we were given foreknowledge of the coming of Zayd at sunrise, and that foreknowledge persisted until the sun had risen, then the coming of Zayd at sunrise would have been known to us through that foreknowledge without any necessity for its renewal. This is, then, how the eternal nature of the knowledge of God should be understood.

The ninth principle is that His will is ancient. In its eternal nature it governs the origination of phenomena in their appointed times in accordance with the eternal foreknowledge [of God]. For if His will were originated [and not ancient], it would have become a substratum for originated phenomena. Furthermore if the will of God should happen in other than Himself, He would not be the willer of it, just as you would not yourself execute an action which is not in yourself. No matter what hypothesis you may assume, its presence requires another will, and likewise [98] the other will requires a third, and so on to infinity. And if it were possible for a will to come into being without [another] will, it would be possible for the world to come into being without a will.

The tenth principle is that God is living possessing life, powerful possessing might, willing possessing a will, a speaker with the ability to speak, a hearer who can hear, and seeing possessing sight. He has the qualities of these ancient attributes. To speak of a knower but without knowledge is like speaking of one who is wealthy but without wealth,

or of knowledge without a knower, or a knower without something known. For knowledge, the knower, and that which is known are inseparable just as murder, the murdered, and the murderer are inseparable. And just as it is impossible to conceive of a murderer without murder and one murdered, or of one murdered without a murderer and murder, it is impossible to conceive of a knower without knowledge, and of knowledge without something known, and of something known without a knower. These three are inseparable and the one is inconceivable without the other. Whoever would deem it possible that a knower could exist independently of knowledge, he would have to deem it possible that a knower could exist independently of that which is known, and that knowledge could exist independently of a knower, since there is no difference between these qualities.

*The Third Pillar Concerning the Knowledge of the Works of God, Involving Ten Principles.*

The first principle is the knowledge that every originated phenomenon in the world is of His make, creation, and invention. There is no other creator of it besides Him, and there is no innovator of it except Him. He created men and made them, and He brought into being their freedom (*qudrah*) and actions (sing. *ḥarakah*). All the works of His servants are created [by Him] and for Him, and are connected with His power, confirming thereby His words when He said, "[There is no God but He], the creator of all things,"[1] and "When God hath created you, and

1. *Sūrah* XI ; 102.

what ye make."[1] and, "Be your converse hidden or open, He truly knoweth the inmost recesses of your hearts. What! Shall He not know whom He hath created, when He is the subtle, the cognizant?"[2] He commanded His servants to be careful in their words, works and secret thoughts and intentions, because He knows the orientation of their works, having arrived at this knowledge through [the act of] creation. And how could He not be a creator of the works of man when His power is complete and free of any impotence. Futhermore His power is connected with the actions of the bodies of men. These actions are similar to one another and the connexion of the power of God with them is essential. What then would prevent its connexion in the case of some actions and would not prevent it in the case of others, when all are similar? For how could the animal be capable of invention by itself? The spider and the bee as well as the other animals product fine works which amaze the minds. But how could they have invented these things alone without the Lord of Lords, when actually they are not aware of the benefits they produce? Let all creatures be abased, for God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, is the sole ruler of the visible and the invisible worlds.

The second principle is the fact that God, being the sole inventor of the actions of His servants, does not prevent them from doing voluntary (*maqdūrah*) actions by way of acquisition, for God has created will (*qudrah*) as well as the willed (*maqdūr*), choice as well as the chosen. Will is a quality with regards to

1. *Sūrah* XXXVII : 94. 2. *Sūrah* LXVII : 13-14.

man and a creation of God rather than an acquisition (*kasb*); whereas actions are a creation of God and an acquired quality of man. They were created voluntary through His will which is one of His attributes. Furthermore they are related to another quality which is called freedom (*qudrah*). Consequently in this relation, they are called an acquisition. And how could they be the result of complete compulsion (*jabr*) when the difference between the voluntary actions and the involuntary (*ḍarūri*) reflexes is instinctively comprehended by man? Or how could they be a creation of man when he does not know the different parts of acquired (*muktasabah*) actions and their numbers? Thus when the two extreme positions are disproved, [namely the position that actions are the result of compulsion and the position that they are the result of volition], there remains nothing except the middle-road position which asserts that they are voluntary through the will of God by invention and through the will of the servant by another connexion which is expressed by the term acquisition (*iktisāb*). The connexion between the will and the willed need not necessarily be one of invention only, since the will of God in eternity was connected with the world although the world was not yet invented, and at the time of invention the connexion is of a different nature. Hence it is evident that the will is not limited by the necessity that the willed should obtain.

The third principle is that the works of the servant, although they are his acquisition (*kasb*), are nevertheless willed by God. Neither a twinkling of

an eye nor a stray thought of a heart ever occur, either in the visible or the invisible world except through His decree and will. He is the source of goodand evil, benefit and harm, belief [Islām] and unbelief, knowledge and ignorance, success and failure, orthodoxy, and heresy, obedience and disobedience, monotheism and polytheism. There is none that rescinds His commands, none that supplements His decrees. He leads astray whom He wishes and guides whom He wishes. "He shall not be asked for his doing, but they shall be asked."[1] This is attested in tradition by the words which enjoy the catholic consent of all the faithful, namely, "What He wills is and what He wills not is not," as well as the words of God, "That had He pleased, God would have certainly guided all men aright;"[2] and again, "Had we pleased we had certainly given to every soul its guidance."[3] As to the evidence for it from reason [ we know ] that if God does neither like nor will sins and crimes, they must be in accordance with the will of the enemy, the devil (*Iblīs*), who is the enemy of God, and consequently what takes place in accordance with the will of the enemy will be greater than what takes place in accordance with the will of God. How on earth would a Muslim deem it possible that the authority of the most powerful God, He of the majesty and honour, be reduced to a state [so weak] that if the authority of a village chieftain were reduced to it, he would scorn and adjure it, since if the enemy of the village chieftain can achieve [99] in the village itself more than the chieftain himself, the

1. *Sūrah* XXI : 23. 2. *Sūrah* XIII : 30. 3. *Sūrah* XXXII ; 13.

latter would abjure his rank and resign his office?

But his prevails among men, and according to the innovators, its prevalence is contrary to the will of God. This would be the limit in weakness and impotence. God, the Lord of Lords is high exalted above the blasphemous words of the transgressors.

Furthermore when it becomes evident that the works of men are, in relation to God, created, it follows that they are also, in the same way, willed by Him. If it should then be asked, "How does God forbid what He has willed and enjoin what He does not will?" we would say that the question is not that of will (*irādah*). Therefore if a master strikes his slave and is reprimanded by the sulṭān, he justifies his action by the rebellion of the slave against him. But the sulṭān disbelieves him. So he attempts to prove his contention by ordering the slave to do something which the slave would refuse in the presence of the sulṭān. Therefore he tells the slave to saddle a mount. Now the master ordered the slave to do something the fulfilment of which he did not really desire. If he had not given his order, he would not have been able to justify himself; and if had really desired its fulfilment he would have desired destruction for himself, which thing is impossible.

The fourth principle is the knowledge that God is generous in creating and inventing and gracious in imposing obligations upon men. Neither creation nor imposing obligations were necessary for Him although the Mu'tazilites hold that these were necessary for the welfare of men. But this is impossible since He is the sole cause (*mūjib*), the only being to

enjoin and to forbid. How then can He be subject to any necessity or exposed to any need or petition.

Necessary (*wājib*) means one of two things: First an act in the neglect of which is harm, either remote as is the case when we say that it is necessary for men to obey God if they want to escape torment by fire in the hereafter, or immediate as is the case when we say that it is necessary for him who is thirsty to drink lest he dies. Secondly, it means anything the non-existence of which would lead to an impossibility. Thus it is said that the existence of that which is known is necessary (*wājib*) since its non-existence will lead to an impossibility, namely knowledge becoming ignorance.

If the adversary, by sanying that the act of creation is necessary for God, should mean the first signification, he would expose God to harm. If he should mean the second signification, he would then be a Muslim, since when knowledge of thing obtains, its existence will be inevitable. But if he should mean a third signification, that thing is unintelligible. As to his statement that [creation and imposing obligational are necessary for the welfare of men, it is worthless since if no harm would overtake God for neglecting the welfare of men, the assertion that [creation and imposing obligation] are necessary, as far as God is concerned, is meaningless. Furthermore, the welfare of men demands that God should create them in Paradise; to create them in the world of misery and to expose them to sin, lay them open to the dangers of punishment, and to the terrors of resurrection and the day of judgment, spell no bliss in the opinion of

the intelligent.

The fifth principle is that, contrary to the position of the Mu'tazilites, God is free to impose on men obligations which are beyondtheir power to fulfil, For if this were not contingent, it would be impossible for men to ask God to spare them that burden. But as a matter of fact they have beseeched God to spare them that burden when they said." "O our Lord ! Lay not on us that for which we have no strength."[1] Furthermore God has informed His Prophet that Abu-Jahl would not believe Him, nevertheless God commanded the Prophet to command Abu-Jahl to believe in all the words of God. But among the words of God were those that Abu-Jahl would not believe Him. How then would he believe Him by not believing Him ? The existence of such a thing is absolutely impossible.

The sixth principle is that, contrary to the position which the Mu'tazilites hold, God is free to inflict pain on men and to torment them, without their having previously committed any offence, and without the necessity of compensating them with future rewards. For He has freedom of action among His subjects and its inconceivable that His subjects would oppose His freedom therein. Tyranny is dispensing with the possessions of others without their permission. But this is impossible in the case of God, because He does not confront possessions belonging to others besides Himself whereby His dispensing with these possessions could be tyrannous.

1. *Sūrah* II : 286.

The existence of such a thing proves its contingency. Thus the slaughter of animals is an infliction of pain on them, and the various kinds of torture which man imposes upon them have not been preceded by any offence. If it should be said that God will raise them from the dead and will reward them according to the amount of pain which they suffered, and that such action is necessary, and, therefore, incumbent upon God to perform, we would say that anyone who would claim that it is incumbent upon God to bring every ant which was killed under the feet and every bug which was crushed between the fingers back to life, so that He might reward them for the pains which they suffered, would violate the dictates of the Law and reason, since He would regard resurrection and reward necessary and therefore incumbent upon God. If he means thereby that God will suffer some harm through its neglect, then it is impossible; and if he means something else, we have already said that it will be intelligent whenever it does not conform to [any of] the [two] meanings of the term necessary (*wājib*) mentioned above.

The seventh principle is that God does with His servants whatever He wishes and does not have to take into consideration that which is salutary (*al-aṣlaḥ*) for His servants, because of what we have already mentioned regarding the fact that there is nothing necessary and, therefore, incumbent upon God. In fact it is not reasonable to think of necessity in connexion with God. "He shall not be asked for His doing, but they shall be asked."[1] I wonder what

1. *Sūrah* XXL : 23.

answer would the Mu'tazilites give when, in connexion with his statement that it is incumbent upon God to do what is salutary and good, we place before Him the following [hypothetical] problem : It is supposed that in the hereafter an argument takes place between two persons, a child and an adult, both of whom died Muslims. Now, according to the Mu'tazilites, God exalts the rank of the adult and gives him preference over the child, because the former toiled and laboured in acts of worship after he attained maturity. In fact this is incumbent upon God according to the Mu'tazilites. Suppose then that the child says, "O my Lord! Why hast thou exalted his rank above mine?" And God answers, "Because he hath attained maturity and hath laboured in acts of worship." Thereupon the child rejoins, "But Lord, it is thou who hast caused me to die a child. Thou shouldst have prolonged my life until I attained maturity; then I would have laboured in Thy worship. But thou, O Lord, hast deviated from justice by favouring him with long life. Lord! Why hast thou so favoured him?" God would then reply, "Because I knew that if thou hadst lived to attain maturity, thou wouldst have committed the sins of polytheism and disobedience. Hence it was salutary for thee to die a child." Such will the apology of the Mu'tazilite be for God. But then the unbelievers will cry up from the midst of Hell-fire saying: "O Lord! Hast thou not known that if we had lived to attain maturity we should have committed the sin of polytheism? Why then hast thou not caused us to die in childhood before we could sin? We should have been content to enjoy in Heaven a lesser rank

than that of the Muslim child." [100] What kind of answer could be given for this? In the face of this situation, is it not imperative to conclude that divine matters, in view of their majesty, transcend the evaluation and judgment of the followers of the Mu'tazilite school?

If it should be said that since God can consider that which is salutary for men but instead he inflicts upon them all manner of torment, His action is undesirable and unworthy of wisdom, we should then say that the undesirable is that which does not promote the satisfaction of one's desire. But a thing may be undesirable to one person and desirable to the other if it disagrees with the desire of the one and promotes that of the other. Thus a family would deem the murder of their child undersirable but their enemies would welcome it. Hence if that which does not promote the satisfaction of the desire of God is what is meant by the word undesirable, then it is impossible, because God has no desire and, therefore, it is impossible to conceive of anything undesirable proceeding from Him, just as it is impossible to conceive of God being tyrannous, because it is impossible to conceive of Him acting freely with the possessions of others, [since He does not confront possessions belonging to others besides Himself]. But if that which does not promote the desire of some other than God is what is meant by the word undesirable, then why did you say that it was impossible for Him? Is it not merely wishful thinking, disproved by what we have postulated in the debate of the adult and the child and the plea of the unbelievers from the midst

of Hell-fire ? Furthermore the wise is he who knows the realities of things and capable of harnessing them in accordance with his will. It is here where the consideration of that which is salutary is imperative. And as to the wise among us, he takes into consideration that which is salutary as far as he himself is concerned, in order to gain therewith praise in this world and reward in the hereafter, or to prevent some evil from befalling him—all of which are impossible in the case of God.

The eighth principle is that the knowledge of God and obedience to Him are obligatory upon men, not, as the Mu'tazilites say, on account of reason, but on account of the ordinance of God and His Law. For if reason renders obedience obligatory, it does so either for nor purpose, which thing is impossible, or for some purpose or desire. This must refer either to God, which thing is impossible since God is free of all desires and wants [in fact belief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, are, the same in relation to God], or to the desire of the creature, which is also impossible, since the creature has no desire at the time, but rather he is worried by reason and is deterred from his desires because of it; and he has no desire except reward or punishment in the hereafter. But how could it be known that God rewards man for obedience and disobedience and does not punish him for them when both, in relation to Him, are the same Furthermore He has no inclination to the one or to the other and is not characterized by the one or the other. The knowledge of how to distinguish between them was arrived at through the Law; while he who

arrives at it through drawing an analogy between the creator and the creature errs, as the creature distinguishes between gratitude and ingratitude on the basis of the amount of joy, gladness, and pleasure which he derives from the one or the other.

If it should be said that if study and knowledge are not rendered obligatory except through the Law, which does not become fixed and defined unless the person who is required to fulfil its obligations studies and examines it, and if that person should say to the Prophet that reason does not place upon him any such obligation, and, therefore, he is not going to pursue the study of the Law despite the fact that it becomes fixed and defined only through such study, with the result that the Prophet is silenced, we would then say that this argument is the same as that of the p rson who, on being warned by another that there is a wild lion standing behind him, and that unless he runs away the beast will devour him, and that he can ascertain that the warning is true if he will only look behind, says to the one who warned him that the truth of the warning can be established only if he looks behind him, yet he is not going to do so unless the truth of the warning is first established. This will reveal the foolishness of the man and will accomplish nothing besides exposing him to the danger of being devoured. It will not, however, cause the warner any harm. The same is true of the Prophet who says, "Beware, for death is lurking behind you and further beyond wild lions and consuming fire await you. If ye do not take heed for yourselves and admit my

ulness by acknowledging my miracle, ye will

surely perish. He who will take notice will realize the dangers, take the necessary precautions, and will consequently be saved but he who will not take notice and persists in his subbornness will die and perish. But I shall suffer no harm even though all men may perish, because my duty is confined to warning."

The Law declared the existence of the wild lions beyond death, while reason aids in understanding the words of the Prophet and in realizing that what he foretells is possible, and nature urges that precautions be taken against injury and harm. A thing is necessary because its neglect causes injury and harm; while is reason that which renders a thing necessary because it makes known the impending harm. But reason in itself does not lead to the knowledge that when a person follows his appetite he will expose himself to harm after death.

This then is the meaning of both the Law and reason as well as their part in determining that which is necessary. For had it not been for the fear of punishment for the neglect of things enjoined, necessity would not have been established, since the term necessary would be meaningless if no harm in the hereafter were consequent upon its neglect in this world.

The ninth principle is that sending prophets is not impossible. This is contrary to the Brahmans who say there is no use in sending prophets since reason renders it unnecessary. [This is false] because reason does not guide men to works which lead to salvation in the hereafter, just as it does not guide them to discover medicines which are useful in the health.

Therefore the need of men for prophets in just like their need for physicians. The integrity of the physician is known through experience white the truthfulness of the principle is known through miracles.

The tenth principle is that God sent Muḥammad as the last of the prophets and as an abrogator of all previous Laws before him, the laws of the Jews and the Christians and the Ṣābians;[1] He upheld him with unmistakable miracles and wonderful signs such as the splitting of the moon,[2] the praise of the pebbles,[3] [101] and causing the mute animal to speak,[4] as well as water flowing from between his fingers[5] and the unmistakable sign of the glorious Qur'ān with which he challenged the Arabs.[6] For the Arabs, in their struggle with the Prophet, did everything to checkmate him, but despite their distinguished ability and excellence in eloquence and rhetoric, they were not able to oppose him with anything like the Qur'ān, because it was not within the power of human beings, [in their writings], to combine the succinctness of the phrases of the Qur'ān and the smoothness of its style (notwithstanding the richness of the Qur'ān in narratives

1. The Ṣābians. Ar. *al-Ṣābi'ah*, mentioned in the Qur'ān three times (*Sūrahs* II: V: 73; XXII: 17), were identical with the Mandeans, a Judaeo-Christian seat who also called themselves *Nasoraie d'Yaḥya*, the Nasoreans (i e., the observants) of St. John, and therefore became erroneosuly known to the modern world as the Christian of St John (the Baptist). They practised the rite of baptism after birth, before marriage, and at various other occasions Evidently Muḥammad regarded them as believer in the true God.

2. Al-Bukhāri, Manāqib al-Anṣār: 35; al-Tirmidhi, Fitan: 20.

3. A very common tradition although it is not found in the various collection of *ḥadīth*.

4. *Cf. Sūrah* VII: 173-74.

5. Al-Bukhāri, Manāqib: 25.

6. *Sūrah* XVII: 90.

of early history and the fact that the Prophet himself was unlettered (*ummi* and unfamiliar with books) with the prediction of unknown future events the subsequent occurrence of which established the truthfulness of the Prophet. Examples of this are found in the words of God when He said, "Ye shall surely enter the sacred Mosque, if God will, in full security, having your heads shaved and your hair cut;"[1] and again, "Alif, Lām, Mīm. The Greeks have been defeated in a land hard by; but after their defeat, they overthrow their foes in a few years."[2]

The reason why a miracle attests the truthfulness of apostles is because everything which human beings cannot do must be the work of God. Whatever is linked by the Prophet with a challenge enjoys the same position as that to which God says "You are right." This is like the case of the person who, standing before the king announces to the subjects that he is the king's messenger, and in order to prove that he is right asks the king to stand upon his throne and sit down three times contrary to his usual practice. The king obliges and the subjects know, beyond the shadow of doubt, that the king's action takes the place of his saying "You are right."

*The Fourth Pillar Concerning the Things Accepted on Authority and Believing what the Prophet Related Concerning them, and it Involves Ten Principles.*

The first principle is the belief in the resurrection of the dead and the day of judgment both of which have been mentioned in tradition.[3] They are

1. *Sūrah* XLVIII : 27. 2. *Sūrah* XXX : 1-3.
3. Al-Bukhāri, Bad'al-Khalq : 27; al-Tirmidhi, Fitan : 21, 42, Qiyāmah : 3.

real and belief in them is obligatory, because, according to reason, they are possible. They signify restoration to life after death which, like the first act of creation, is within the power of God. Said God, "Who shall give life to bones when they are rotten? Say: 'He shall give life to them who gave them being at first'."[1] Therefore the ability of God to restore the dead to life is deduced from His ability to perform the first act of creation. Said, God, "Your creation and quickening (hereafter), are but as those of a single individual."[2] Restoration to life is nothing but a second act of creation, and is possible like the first act of creation.

The second principle is the belief in the inquisition of Munkar and Nakir. This is mentioned in tradition,[3] and should, therefore, be accepted, because it is possible, since it does not require anything except the restoration to life of that part [of the body] with which dialogues are understood. This is possible in itself and neither the apparent stillness of the dead man's corpse nor our failure to hear the questions put to him will refute it. For the sleeping person is outwardly still and motionless, but he perceives inwardly pains and pleasures the effects of which he feels once he is awake. Furthermore the Prophet used to hear the voice of Gabriel and to see him while those who were around neither heard nor saw him.[4] For "nought of His knowledge shall they grasp, save what He willeth."[5] Thus if God does

1. *Sūrah* XXXVI : 78.
2. *Sūrah* XXXI : 27.
3. Al-Tirmidhi, Jana'iz : 70.
4. *Cf.* al-Dārimi, Isti'dhān : 10.
5. *Sūrah* II : 256 b.

not create for men hearing and sight, they will not know Him.

The third principle is the belief in the punishment of the grave which is mentioned in tradition.[1] God [also] said, "It is the fire to which they shall be exposed morning and evening, and on the day when 'the Hour' shall arrive—'Bring in the family of Pharaoh into the severest punishment.'"[2] It was also well known that the Prophet and the righteous Fathers were wont to seek refuge in God from the punishment of the Grave.[3] This punishment of the grave is possible and the fact that the corpse may be dismembered and scattered in the bellies of lions and the gizzards of fowls does not prevent the belief in it, because the bodily members which feel the pains of punishment are those particular members to which God ordains [102] the restoration of sense perception and feeling.

The fourth principle is the belief in the balance which is real. God said, "Just balances will we set up for the day of resurrection;"[4] and again, "And they whose balances shall be heavy, these are they who shall be happy. And they whose balances shall be light, these are they who have lost their souls."[5] The manner in which this is done is that God causes to exist in the balance sheets of men's works a weight in proportion to the value of these works in His sight. Consequently the value of the works of men becomes known to them so that the justice of God in punish-

1. Al-Tirmidhi, Janā'iz : 70.
2. *Sūrah* XL : 49.
3. Muslim, Jannah : 67.
4. *Sūrah* XXI : 48.
5. *Sūrah* VII : 7-8.

ment, His grace in forgiveness, and generosity in reward might become evident.

The fifth principle is the belief in the bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), which is stretched over Hell; it is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of the sword. God said, "And guide them to the road for Hell, and set them forth: they shall be questioned."[1] This is also possible and belief in it is obligatory. For God who is able to make the birds fly in the air is also able to make man walk over the bridge.

The sixth principle is the belief that Paradise and Hell are created. God said, "And vie in haste for pardon from your Lord, and a Paradise, vast as the Heavens and the Earth, prepared for those who fear God.[2] The word of God 'prepared proves that both Paradise and Hell are created. Therefore the literal meaning of the verse should be accepted, especially since it is not impossible. Nor will it be said that there is no use in their creation before the day of judgment because "God is not responsible to anyone for His works while His servants are answerable for theirs."[3]

The seventh principle is that the rightful imāms after the Apostle of God are Abu-Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān, and then 'Ali. No clear designation of an imām was ever made by the Apostle of God. For had there been any such designation it would have had a much better chance to become known and survive than the designation of a local imām in some part of the land by unknown governors and army

1. *Sūrah* XXXVII : 23-24.
2. *Sūrah* III : 127.
3. *Sūrah* XXI : 23.

commanders. In the latter case the designation became known and survived. How then did it not become known and survive in the case of the Apostle? If it were really made, how then did it disappear and why was it not transmitted to us? Accordingly Abu-Bakr was not an imām except through election (*ikhtiyār*) and through the oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*). To hold that someone other than Abu-Bakr was designated[1] would amount to the same thing as accusing all the Companions of contradicting the Apostle and of violating the principle of catholic consent. No one dares fabricate such an accusation except the Rāfidites.[2] The belief of the orthodox community requires the vindication of all the Companions as well as their praise just as God and His Apostle have praised them.[3] As to the struggle which took place between Mu'āwiyah and 'Ali, it was the result of different points of view in independent interpretation (*ijtihād*) rather than a struggle wherein Mu'āwiyah disputed 'Ali's right to the imāmate. 'Ali deemed that the surrender of the assassins of 'Uthmān, because of their many relatives among the tribes and the fact that these relatives were scattered all over the army, would lead to disturbances which would endanger the safety of the imāmate in its early days. He, therefore, saw fit to postpone their

1. The reference here is to Shī'ites who reject the doctrine of election and hold that 'Ali was clearly and directly designated by Muhammad as his successor. They find support in the hadith in which the Prophet tells 'Ali that the relation between them was the same as that which existed between Moses and Aaron. See al-Bukhāri, Faḍā'i Aṣḥāb al-Nabi; 10; al-Tirmidhi, Manāqib: 19-20.

2. The term is used here in its loose application to the Shi'ites in general.

3. *Cf.* Ṭayālisi: 31.

surrender. On the other hand, Mu'āwiyah thought that any delay in the surrender of the assassins to justice would, in view of the enormity of their crime, incite further attacks on the lives of imāms and would lead to the shedding of blood. One of the celebrated learned men said that every independent interpretor (*mujtahid*) of the law was right in his own interpretation; while others said that he who is right is one. No one of learning and intelligence, however, has charged 'Ali with error [in his interpretation].

The eighth principle is that the excellence of the Companions is in accordance to their chronological order in which they succeeded the Prophet. For real excellence is that which is excellent in the sight of God, and no one will have knowledge of it except the Apostle of God. Several verses in praise of all the Companions were revealed and a number of traditions which recite their honour have been handed down. Yet the subtle distinction of excellence and precedence is not grasped except by those who were eye-witnesses to revelation and had the opportunity to observe it in its setting and to watch its development. Had they not understood that so well they would not have arranged matters as they did, since they did not use to abandon the way of God because of threat of pressure and nothing would turn them away from truth.

The ninth principle is that, in addition to Islam, the qualifications of the imāmate are five:[1] male sex, being of age (*taklīf*), piety (*wara'*), learning, compe-

1. *Cf.* Al-Māwardi, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyah*, ed. M. Enger (Bonn, 1853), pp. 3-7.

tence (*kifāyah*), and membership in the Qurayhs tribe, because the Apostle said, "The imāms should be of the Quraysh."[1] When these qualifications obtain in several candidates, the imām will be the one who receives the homage and allegiance of the majority of Muslims, and he who contradicts the [will of the] majority is a trespasser who should be brought back into line with the majority.

The tenth principle is that if neither piety nor knowledge obtain in the claimant, yet any attempt to oust him will result in perilous and unbearable strife, we hold that his imamate should be considered legitimate and binding because of the grave dilemma which confronts us. Thus we have either to replace him by another and consequently stir strife, in which case the evil that will afflict the Muslims will surpass any loss they may incur because of the claimant's lack of piety and knowledge, qualifications designed to promote the public welfare; but no one will destroy the means of welfare in order to promote and enhance it, for this will be just like the person who will erect a single house and demolish a whole town; or we have to declare that there is no imām and consequently there is neither law nor equity in the land, which thing is impossible. We declare that the authority of unjust rulers should be enforced in their land because of the urgent need for authority therein. How, then, do we not declare an imamate legitimate when the need for it is great and urgent?

These then are four pillars which comprise the forty principles which pertain to the foundations

1. Al-Bukhāri, Aḥkām: 2: al-Tirmidhi, Fitan: 49.

of the articles of faith. He who believes therein will be in harmony with the orthodox community and the enemy of all heretics. May God by His grace guide us and lead our steps into the way of truth.

## SECTION IV

*The Fourth Section of the Book on the Foundations of the Articles of Faith*

*On belief and Islam, the relation between and the differences which distinguish them, whether belief increases or decreases and the qualifications which the Fathers laid down concerning it. This section comprises three problems :*

(Problem). People disagreed concerning Islam, whether it was identical with belief (*īmān*) or different therefrom ; and, in the event it was different, whether it was removed from belief and could exist without it, or inseparable from it and does not exist without it. Some have said that they are one and the same thing, others that they are two different things wholly unrelated, and still othere that although they are two different things, they are closely related to each other. Abu-Ṭālib al-Makki had something to say in this connexion ; yet what he said was greatly confused and extremely long.[1] Let us, therefore, proceed to declare the truth without bothering about what is useless.

To begin with, this discussion comprises three considerations : first concerning the literal meaning of the two terms Islam and belief (*īmān*); second the technical meaning of the two terms in the Qur'ān and tradition ; and third the functions which they fulfil in this

1. *Cf.* Abu-Ṭālib al-Makki, *Qūt-al-Qulūb* (Cairo, 1351), Vol. III, pp. 183-205.

world and the next. The first is one of language, the second is one of interpretation, and the third is one of jurisprudence and Law.

The first consideration concerning the literal meaning of the words. Belief (*īmān*) means literally acceptance (*taṣdīq*). God said, "But thou wilt not believe us;"[1] which is the same as saying that he will not accept their word. Islam on the other hand means submission (*taslīm*), and surrender (*istislām*) to God through yielding (*idh'ān*) and compliance (*inqiyād*); and henceforth abjuring rebellion, pride, and stubbornness. Acceptance lies in the heart while the tongue serves as its interpreter. But submission is more comprehensive and pervades the heart, the tongue and the senses. For every acceptance with the mind (*taṣdiq bi'l-qalib*) is a submission and a disavowal of pride and unbelief. The same is true of verbal confession (*al-i'tirāf bi'l-lisān*) as well as of obedience and compliance with the senses. According to the dictates of language Islam is the more general term, while belief (*īmān*) is the more specific. Therefore belief represents the noblest part of Islam. Consequently every acceptance is submission, but not every submission is acceptance.

The second consideration treats of the technical meaning of the two terms in the Qur'ān and tradition. The truth of the matter is that the Law (*al-shar'*) i.e. the Qur'ān and tradition, has used the two terms as synonyms interchangeably, as different terms of different meaning, and as related terms the one being a part of the other.

1. *Sūrah* XII : 17.

Their use synonymously is shown in the words of God when He said, "And we brought forth the *believers* who were in the city: but we found not in it but one family of Muslims."[1] Yet as a matter of fact there was only one family. God said again, "O my people. If ye believe in God, then put your trust in Him—if ye be Muslims."[2] The Apostle also said, "Islam was built upon five pillars."[3] At another time the Apostle was asked what belief (*īmān*) was and he gave the same answer, namely the five pillars.

The use of the terms Islam and belief (*imān*) to signify different meanings is shown in the words of God when He said, "The Arabs of the desert say, 'We believe'. Say thou: Ye believe not; but rather say, 'We profess Islam'."[5] This means that they have surrendered outwardly only. In this case the Apostle used belief (*imān*) for acceptance with the mind only and used Islam for surrender outwardly through the tongue and senses.

[Similarly when Gabriel assumed the aspect of a stranger] and interrogated the Prophet concerning belief (*īmān*) the latter replied saying, "Belief is to believe in God, His angels, books, apostles, the last day, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment, and in the decrees of God, the good and the evil."[6] Gabriel then asked what Islam was, to which the

1. *Sūrah* LI : 35-36.

2. *Sūrah* X : 84.

3. Al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 1. These five are the witness (*al-shahādah*), prayer (*ṣalāh*), almsgiving (*zakāh*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and fasting (*ṣawm*).

4. Al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 40.

5. *Sūrah* XLIX : 14. *Cf.* Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 89-91.

6. Al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 37.

Apostle replied by citing the five pillars.[1] He thus used Islam for submission outwardly in word and deed.

According to a tradition related on the authority of Sa'd [ibn-abi-Waqqāṣ] the Apostle once gave a certain man a gift and to another he gave nothing. Whereupon Sa'd said, "O Apostle of God. Thou hast given this man nothing although he is a believer;" to which the Apostle added, "Or a Muslim." Sa'd repeated his question and again the Apostle added, "Or a Muslim."[2]

Their use as related terms, the one being a part of the other is shown by what has been related concerning the Apostle of God when he was asked what works were best and he replied, "Islam"; and when he was asked which type of Islam was best he answered. "Belief".[3] This proves the use of Islam and belief (*imān*) both as different terms and as related terms the one being a part of the other, which latter use is the best linguistically, because belief is in reality a work—in fact the best of works. Islam on the other hand is submission either with the mind, or with the tongue, or with the senses; but the best is the submission with the mind. It is that acceptance which is called belief.

The use of the terms Islam and belief (*īmān*) as two different words of different meanings, as [104] related terms, the one being a part of the other, and as synonyms, does not overstep the possibilities which the language allows. Their use as different terms of

1. Al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 37. 2. Al-Nasā'ī, Īmān : 7.
3. *Cf.* Al-Nasā'ī, Īmān : 1, 11.

different meanings makes belief (*īmān*) signify acceptance with the mind only, which signification conforms to the dictates of language; it makes Islam signify submission outwardly, which thing is also in harmony with the requirements of language. For the submission in part is also called submission, since the universal application of a term is not a necessary prerequisite for its use. Thus he who touches another with but a part of his body is nevertheless called contiguous despite the fact that the whole of his body is not in contact with that of the other. Hence the application of the term Islam to outward submission, although the inward submission is lacking, is in complete harmony with the rules of language. In this sense were the words of God used when He said, "The Arabs of the desert say, 'We believe.' Say thou: Ye believe not, but rather say "We profess Islam'."[1] The same is true of the use of the two words [Islam and (*imān*)] in the tradition related by Sa'd [ibn-abi-Waqqāṣ] where the Prophet added "Or a Muslim."[2] He did that because he preferred the one to the other. What is meant by the use of the two terms as different words of different meanings is that the terms contend for superiority and vie with each other in excellence.

Their use as related terms, the one being a part of the other, is also in harmony with the rules of language. It is the use of Islam for submission with the mind as well as with word and deed; while using belief (*īmān*) for a part of Islam, namely acceptance with the mind. This is what we meant by the

1. *Sūrah* XLIX : 14. 2. See above, p. 102.

use of Islam and belief (*Īnām*) as related terms, the one being a part of the other (*tadākhul*). It satisfies the rules of language with respect to both the specific application of belief (*īmān*) and the general use of Islam, which is all-inclusive. [The one is specific and particular while the other is general and universal]. It was in this sense that the Apostle used the term belief (*īmān*) when he replied to the question put to him as to which type of Islam was best, thereby making it a particular aspect of Islam and a part of it.

The use of the two terms synonymously, thereby using the word Islam for both inward and outward submission, would make it all submission; the same is true of belief (*imān*), which may be used freely and its particular meaning extended, thereby making it general and including under it outward [as well as inward] submission. This is quite possible because the outward submission through word and deed is the fruit and result of inward submission. Thus the name of a certain tree is freely used to signify both the plant itself as well as the fruit of the plant. Similarly the signification of the term belief may be extended so as to become general, thereby making it synonymous with the term Islam and in exact agreement with it. It was in this sense that God used the words, "But we found not in it but one family of Muslims."[1]

The third consideration deals with the legal rules which govern the two terms. Islam and belief (*īmān*) have two functions, one which pertains to the here-

1. *Sūrah* LI : 36.

after (*ukhrawi*) and one which pertains to this world (*dunyāwi*).

The function which pertains to the hereafter is for the purpose of bringing men forth from Hell fire and preventing them from remaining there for ever. The Apostle of God said, "Whoever hath in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire."[1] People disagreed concerning this function and concerning its fulfilment, and have asked what things comprised belief (*īmān*). Some have taught that it is simply an inward adherence (*'aqd bi'l-qalb*) and verbal confession (*shahādah bi'l-lisān*). Others add a third element, works according to the pillars [of Islam].

We shall then draw the veil off and declare that there is no disagreement at all that anyone who combines in himself all these three elements will have his final abode in Paradise. This is the first degree.

The second degree is that where a person has the first two elements and a part of the third, namely inward adherence and verbal confession together with some works [according to the pillars of Islam], but commits one or several [ mortal ] sins (*kabā'ir*). According to the Mu'tazilites, the person [by committing such mortal sins] departs from the true belief (*īmān*) but does not thereby become an unbeliever. He simply becomes a reprobate (*fāsiq*). [He is neither a believer nor an unbeliever] but occupies an intermediary position between the two, and will remain eternally in Hell fire. This, however, is false as we shall show.

1. *Cf.* Al-Bukhārī, Imām : 13 ; al-Tirmidhi, Fitan : 17.

The third degree is where the person fulfils the inward adherence and verbal confession but fails to perform the works [according to the pillars of Islam]. Men have disagreed concerning it. Abu-Ṭālib al-Makki held that works were a part of belief (*īmān*) and the latter is incomplete without them. He also claimed that catholic consent (*ijmā'*) back his position and cited in its support proofs and evidence which tend to prove the contrary, such as the words of God when He said. "Those who believe and do the things that are right."[1] This quotation would indicate that works are something over and above belief (*īmān*) rather than a part of it. Otherwise the reference to works would be a repetition, which is redundant.

It is strange that Abu-Ṭālib al-Makki should claim the support of catholic consent for this position of his and yet relate the following tradition, "No one would be declared an unbeliever unless he should deny what he hath professed," and finds fault with the Mu'tazilites because they insist that a person who commits a mortal sin will remain eternally in Hell fire. Yet he who holds such views holds the same views the Mu'tazilites hold, since if he were asked whether or not a person, who accepted Islam with his heart and testified with his tongue thereto and then died would be in Paradise, he would necessarily say 'Yes', thereby asserting that belief (*īmān*) could exist without works. We would then add another question and ask him whether or not that person, if he had lived until the time of prayer had arrived, but

1. *Sūrah* II : 23, 76, 277.

neglected to perform his prayer and died immediately after, or if he had committed fornication and died whether or not he would remain eternally in Hell fire? If he should answer, 'Yes', he would agree with the Mu'tazilites; but if he should say, 'No', it would amount to a declaration that works are neither a part of belief (*īmān*) itself nor a prerequisite for its existence. Neither are [105] the necessary for gaining the reward of Paradise. But if he should say that what he meant was that the person [would remain eternally in Hell fire] only if he had lived a long time without either praying or attempting any of the works prescribed by the Law, we would are, "Exactly how long is that period, and how many say, those good works through the neglect of which belief is rendered worthless? How many of the mortal sins would, if committed, annul belief?" Such a thing is impossible to determine and no one has ever done so.

The fourth degree is represented in the case of the person who accepts [Islam] inwardly with his mind but dies before either confessing it verbally with his tongue or performing any of the works which its pillars prescribe. Would it be said that such a person died a believer? People differ on this question. Those who insist on verbal confession as a prerequisite of belief would say that he died before fulfilling the conditions of belief. But this is false because the Apostle said, "Whoever hath in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." This person's heart overflows with belief; how then would he remain eternally in Hell

fire ? Futhermore when Gabriel interrogated the Apostle concerning belief (*īmān*), the only condition set forth was to believe (*taṣdīq*) [*i.e.*, verbal confession] in God, His angels, His books the last day [the resurrection of the dead, the ]udgment, and in the decrees of God, the good and the evil], as has already been mentioned.

The fifth degree is when a person accepts [Islam] in his mind and lives long enough to be able to confess the two words of the witness with his tongue and to know that they are obligatory upon him, but for some reason, he does not so confess them. It is possible that his failure to confess them with his tongue is like his failure to pray. Concerning such a person we will say that he is a believer not doomed to Hell fire eternally. For belief (*īmān*) is simple acceptance (*taṣdīq*) and the tongue is its interpreter. It is certain, therefore, that belief exists in its entirety ever before its verbal confession with the tongue, so that the tongue can tnterpret it. This is the most plausible position, since there is no choice but to follow the exact meaning of terms and to satisfy the dictates of language. The Apostle said, "Whoever hath in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire". The heart does not becomes void of belief because of the failure of the person to fulfil the duty of confessing that belief with the tongue, just as it does not become void of belief because of the failure of the person to perform obligatory works. Some men have said that to confess the two words of the witness with the tongue is indispensable (*rukn*) because it is not merely an out-

ward expression of the inward [belief], but rather the sealing of a contract and the commencement of a life of witness and obligation. The first position is the more correct. In this connexion the Murji'ites[1] have gone to the extreme, declaring that no one who professed to be a Muslim will ever enter Hell fire, and that a believer, even if he should sin, is sure of salvation. We shall see to it that their position is refuted.

The sixth degree is to say with the tongue that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allah, but disbelieve it in his mind. We have no doubt that the fate of such a person in the hereafter is with the unbelievers and infidels, and that he will remain eternally in Hell fire. On the other hand we are sure that in this world, the affairs of which are entrusted to imāms and governors, he will be reckoned among the Muslims, because we have no access to his heart and have, therefore, to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he adheres in his mind to what he had professed with his tongue.

We, however, have our doubts concerning a third matter, namely the status which exists in this world between such a person and his God, in the event that one of his relatives should die, and as a

1. The Murji'ites' fundamental doctrine consisted in the suspension (*irjā'*) of judgment against believers who commit sin. They refused to declare a person an infidel because, to them, the fact that he was nominally a Muslim sufficed. More specifically they refused to see in the suppression of religious law by the Ummayad caliphs a justifiable cause for denying that house the homage due them as the *de facto* rulers of Islam. See Ibn-Hazam, *al-Faṣl fi al-Milal w-al-Ahwā' w-al-Niḥal* (Cairo, 1347-48), Vol. II, p. 89; *Mukhtaṣar al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, pp. 122-23.

result of his relative's death he accepts Islam in his mind as well. Having thus accepted Islam in his mind as well, he sounds the learned men concerning his status saying, "I did not accept Islam with my mind, [although I had confessed it with my tongue], until my relative died. Having fallen heir to his property. I wish to know whether or not it is lawful for me to receive it?" Or in case he had married a Muslim woman [while he yet disbelieved in his mind], but upon his marriage he came to accept Islam in his mind; would he be required to go through the marriage contract again? These questions are controversial and leave room for different opinions. Thus it may be said that the decisions of this world, whether they be manifest or hidden, depend upon the express confession of Islam. It may also be said that, in so far as they pertain to the individual in his relations to other men, these decisions depend upon the outward confession of Islam, because the mind of the individual is not known to others besides himself and God. The more correct posftion, and God knows best, is that it is unlawful for that person to receive the inheritance of his deceased relative, and that he must go through the marriage contract a second time. For this reason, Ḥudhayfah [ibn-al-Yamān] used to stay away from the funerals of hypocrites, and it was customary for 'Umar to follow his example and absent himself whenever Ḥudhayfah did so. Nevertheless prayer over the dead is a formal ceremonial, although it is also one of the acts of worship. To guard oneself against what is unlawful is, like prayer, among the obliga-

tions of the individual towards God. This is not contradictory to our saying that inheritance is the law of Islam. Islam is surrender (*istislām*), in fact complete surrender is that which includes both outward and inward [acts]. These are doubtful problems in jurisprudence, based upon the outward meaning of words, vague generalites, and mechanical analogies. Consequently no one immature in knowledge should think that he could arrive at absolute certainty in any of these cases, although it has been customary to cite them under those parts of scholastic theology where absolute certainty is the desired goal. For no one who follows the common practices and conventional formalities will ever succeed.

If you should say, "What then are the fallacies of the Mu'tazilites and the Murji'ites, and what are the proofs that their position is false?" I would then say that their fallacies arose from [their failure to understand] certain generalities mentioned in the Qur'ān. As to the Murji'ites, they said that no believer would enter Hell fire, although he might commit every possible sin. They based their position on the words of God when He said, "And whoever believeth in his Lord, need not fear either loss or wrong,"[1] and again on His words when He said, "And they who believed in God and His Apostle are the men of truth, and the witnesses in the presence of the Lord; they shall have their reward and their light; but as for the infidels and those who give the lie to Our signs, these shall be

1. *Sūrah* LXXII : 13.

the inmates of Hell."[1] [As further evidence for their position] they quote the words of God when He said, "So oft as a crowd shall be thrown into it, its keepers shall ask them, 'Came not the warner to you?' They shall say, 'Yes, there came to us one charged with warnings; but we treated him as a liar and said, "Nothing hath God sent down. Ye are in nothing but a vast delusion".' "[2] His saying, "So oft as a crowd is thrown", is inclusive and therefore every one who was thrown into Hell fire must have treated the warner as a liar. [They too quote] the words of God "None shall be cast to it but the most wretched,—who hath called the truth a lie and turned their back."[3] In this verse we find a specification, as well as an affirmation and a negation. Again they quote the words of God when He said, "To them who shall present themselves with good works, shall be a reward beyond their desert, and they shall be secure from terror on that day."[4] But belief is the beginning of good works. Again they quote, "And God loveth of doers of good."[5] God also said, "Verily We will not suffer the reward of him whose works were good to perish."[6] [106] But they have no proof in any of these verses, because when belief is mentioned in them it means belief coupled with good works. We have shown that belief is used to signify Islam, which is in conformity with the mind, word, and deed. Supporting this interpretation are many traditions concerning the punishment of sinners and the extent of their penalty. Furthermore the Prophet said, "Whoever hath in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will

1. *Sūrah* LVII : 18. 2. *Sūrah* LXIII : 8-9 3. *Sūrah* XCII : 15-16.
4. *Sūrah* XXVII: 91. 5. *Sūrah* III : 129. 6. *Sūrah* XVIII : 29.

be brought from Hell fire." But how could anyone be brought forth from Hell fire if he had not first entered therein? We also find in the Qur'ān the following words of God, "Truly God will not forgive associating other gods with Him ; but other sins He will forgive to whom He will."[1] The fact that God may exempt from punishment according to His will, signifies discrimination. He also said, "And for such as will rebel against God and His Apostle is the fire of Hell. They shall remain therein always, - forever."[2] To declare such a person an unbeliever is, nevertheless, unjust. God also said, "Verily the unjust are in lasting torment."[3] And again, "And they who shall present themselves with evil shall be flung downward on their faces into the fire."[4] All these generalities contradict theirs. Therefore it is inevitable to resort to specification and interpretation on both sides; especially when traditions are clear in their pronouncements that the sinners will be punished. In fact the words of God, "No one is there of you who shall not go down unto it,"[5] is almost an express declaration that punishment is inevitable to all, because every believer cannot help but commit an offence. Furthermore, by the words, "None shall be cast to it but the most wretched,—who hath called the truth a lie and turned their back,"[6] God meant certain particular men, since the appellation 'the most wretched' refers to a particular person. Again in His word, "So oft as a crowd shall be thrown into it, its keepers

1. *Sūrah* IV : 116. 2. *Sūrah* LXXII : 24. 3. *Sūrah* XLII : 44.
4. *Sūrah* XXVII : 92.
5. *Sūrah* XIX : 72 ; see also *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Vol. XVI, pp. 81-87.
6. *Sūrah* XCII : 15-16.

shall ask them . . .",[1] God meant a special group of unbelievers. At any rate the particularization of the general is not difficult. Because of this last verse al-Ash'ari as well as several other scholastics was misled into denying the general application [of anything at all], and said that such terms must await the development of [new] contexts which will determine and clarify their significations.

The fallacy of the Mu'tazilites arose from failure to understand the following words of God. [They have thus failed to grasp the real meaning of] the words of God when He said, "Surely will I forgive him who turneth to God and believeth, and worketh righteousness, and then yieldeth to righteousness;"[2] and His words when He declared, "I swear by the declining day. Verily men's lot is cast amid destruction, save those who believe and do the things which be right."[3] Also His words when He said, "No one is there of you who shall not go down unto it—this is a settled decree with thy Lord,"[4] and added, "Then will we deliver those who had the fear of God."[5] Also the words of God when He said, "And for such as will rebel against God and His Apostle is the fire of Hell,"[6] as well as every verse wherein God mentioned good works coupled with belief. Also the words of God when He said, "But whoever shall kill a believer of set purpose, his recompense shall be Hell—forever shall he abide in it."[7] These generalities are also specific as is proved by the words of God when He said, "But other sins He will forgive to him whom He

1. *Sūrah* LXVII : 8. 2. *Sūrah* XX : 84. 3. *Sūrah* CIII : 1-3.
4. *Sūrah* XIX ; 72. 5. *Sūrah* XIX : 73. 6. *Sūrah* LXXII: 24.
7. *Sūrah* IV : 95.

will."[1] Therefore freedom to forgive men sins, other than the sin of polytheism, must be left to God. Similarly the words of the Apostle when he said, "Whoever hath in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire," prove the same thing. So also do the words of God when He declared, "Verily we will not suffer the reward of him whose works were good to perish;"[2] and again "Verily God suffereth not the reward of the righteous to perish."[3] How then would God suffer the reward of belief itself as well as that of good works to be lost because of one single offence? As to the words of God, "But whoever shall kill a believer of set purpose," they mean whoever shall kill a believer because of his belief, and the words have been revealed for that particular purpose.

You may say, "What has already been said will lead to the conclusion that belief obtains without good works although it is well known that the Fathers said that belief comprises inward adherence, verbal confession and good works; explain to us therefore the meaning of all this." I shall then say: It is not unlikely that good works be considered a part of belief, because they perfect and complete it, just as it is said that the head and hands are part of man. It is evident that a person will cease to be human if his head no longer exists; but he will not cease to be a human being if one of his hands is lost through amputation. Similarly both the magnificent (*takbīr*) and the praise (*tasbīh*) [at the beginning of prayer] are considered a part of prayer, although it is not annulled with their

1. *Sūrah* IV: 116. 2. *Sūrah* XVIII: 29. *Sūrah* IX: 121.

omission. Therefore acceptance with the mind stands in relation to belief as does the head in relation to the existence of man [in this life], since the one depends for its existence upon the other and ceases to exist when the other no longer is. The remaining good works are like the limbs of the body, some are more important than the others. The Apostle said, "A believer is no longer a believer when he commits fornication."[1] Furthermore the Companions held the same opinion as the Mu'tazilites concerning the fact that a person ceases to be a believer when he commits the sin of fornication. When this really means is that such a person is no longer a real believer possessing a complete and perfect belief, just as the deformed individual whose limbs have been amputated is described as being no longer a human being; in other words he lacks that perfection which is beyond actual humanity.

(A problem). You may say, "The Fathers have agreed that belief is subject to increase and depreciation—increasing with obedience and good works, and decreasing with disobedience and sin." In that case I shall say that the Fathers are just witnesses, and no one has any right to depart from their judgment. What they have said is true; but the important thing is to grasp its meaning. It proves that good works are not an integral part of belief nor a basic thing for its existence. Rather they are a superaddition (*mazīd*) which augments belief. Both the surplus and the deficit exist, but nothing increases in itself. Thus it cannot be said that man's head is an addition or a

1. Al-Bukhāri, Maẓālim: 31, Ḥudūd; 1, 19; ibn Mājah, Fitan: ?

surplus which increases his stature or size; but his beard and corpulence are. Similarly it is not permissible to say that prayer is augmented and increased by kneeling and prostration; rather it is augmented by the manner of its execution and the usages followed therein. This, therefore, is a clear declaration that belief as such does exist, and that once it exists, it may vary, subject to increase and depreciation.

If you then say that the ambiguity lies in the problem of acceptance; how could it increase and diminish when it is always the same? I shall then say that if we put aside all hypocrisy and ignore the opposition of adversaries and then lift the veil off the exact meaning of the word, all ambiguity will be removed. We consequently say that belief is a common noun used in [107] three different ways.

The first usage denotes an acceptance with the heart (*taṣdīq bi'l-qalb*), a belief (*i'tiqād*) based on the authority of others (*taqlīd*) without the benefit of revelation and an open heart. This is the belief of the common folk; in fact it is the belief of all people except the elite. This belief is, as it were, a knot bound around the heart, sometimes tightened and made stronger and sometimes loosened and made weaker, just like the knot of any string.

Do not consider this unlikely but remember the tenacity of Jews in holding fast to their doctrine, how they cannot be shaken or moved from it either by threatening, or warning, promising or admonishing, examining or proving. The same is true of Christians and heretics among whom exist some who can be made to doubt with the least word, and can be made

to move from their belief with the least attraction or threat, although, like the Jews, they do not doubt the veracity of their own doctrine, yet they differ in the degree of their determination. Such variations in the degree of determination do also exist in the true belief, and good works influence the development and growth of this determination, just as irrigation influences the growth of trees. Said God, "[Whenever a *Sūrah* is sent down] ... it will increase the belief of those who believe, [and they shall rejoice]."[1] And again, "[He it is who sendeth down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers] that they might increase in belief."[2] According to one tradition the Prophet said, "Belief is subject to increase and depreciation."[3] This is accomplished by the influence of good works upon the heart, a thing which is not perceived except by him who meditates over his different inner states during the hours of worship and applies himself solely to it through the presence of the heart at the time of inactivity and languor, as well as realizing the variations which are inherent in devoting oneself in these states to the articles of belief, so that the tie which binds him to his belief might become firmer and consequently harder to undo for the person who wishes to loosen it with doubt. In fact if the person, who believes that the orphan offers him the opportunity to reveal the quality of mercy, will act according to his belief and show kindness toward the orphan, he will be assured within himself of the real existence of mercy as well as of its manifold increase through its active operation. Similarly if the person who believes

1. *Sūrah* IX : 125. 2. *Sūrah* XLVIII : 4.
3. Ibn-Mājah, Intro 9. ; *cf.* al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 33 ; al-Tirmidhi, Īmān : 6.

in modesty will, in accordance with his belief, humble himself before another person, he will sense the quality of modesty within himself at the time he performs the act. The same is true of all the qualities of the heart: all bodily actions proceed from them, and then the very influence of these actions react upon them, thereby confirming [their existence] and increasing [their strength]. This subject will be discussed in both the Quarter on the Saving Matters of Life and the Quarter on the Destructive Matters in Life when we take up the relation of the inward to the outward and that of works to beliefs. This relation is of the same nature as that of the relation between the visible world (*'ālam al-mulk*) and the invisible world (*'ālam al-malakūt*). By the visible world (*'ālam al-mulk*), which is also called *'ālam al-shahādah*, I mean the world which is perceived by the senses; and by the invisible world (*'ālam al-malakūt*), which is also called *'ālam al-ghayb*, I mean the world which is perceived by the light of the mind (*nūr al-baṣīrah*). The heart belongs to the invisible world while the members of the body as well as their activities belong to the visible world. The subtlety and fineness of the interdependence of the two worlds have led some men to think that they are closely connected, while others thought that there was no world except the visible (*'ālam al-shahādah*) which is made of the concrete and tangible bodies. One who has perceived the two worlds and realized first their independence and then their interdependence expressed his observation in the following manner:

"The glass was fine, the wine was clear,

Like a single body they seemed to appear.
So confusion spread: to some it seemed
Nothing but glass; while others swore
'This is but wine, no glass is here'."

Let us go back to the main purpose of our discussion, especially since the invisible world is outside the scope of the science of practical religion (*'ilm al-mu'āmalah*) Nevertheless the two worlds are connected and interdependent. For this reason the science of revelation (*'ilm al-mukāshafah*) extends its scope every now and then into the realm of practical religion and does not withdraw until it imposes some obligations. This then is how belief, in accordance with this usage, increases through good works. For this reason 'Ali said, "Verily belief will loom as a single white spot in the heart of man. If the man will do that which is good, the white spot will grow and spread until the whole heart is white. On the other hand hypocrisy makes its first appearance as a black blotch in the heart of man. If the man will do that which is unlawful, the black blotch will grow and spread until the whole heart is black, and blackness becomes man's second nature." Said God, "Nay. But their own works have got the mastery over their hearts."[1]

The second usage of the term belief (*īmān*) denotes both acceptance and works, just as the Apostle stated when he said, "Belief comprises over seventy divisions (sing. *bāb*)."[2] The same thing is also seen in the words of the Apostle when He said,

1. *Sūrah* LXXXIV : 16.
2. *Cf.* Al-Bukhāri, Īmān : 2; ibn Mājah, Intro. 9.

"A believer is no longer a believer when he commits fornication." And when works become an integral part of belief, it becomes evident that it is subject to increase and depreciation. Does this, however, affect belief which is mere acceptance? The question is one of opinion, and we have already stated that it does.

The third usage of the term belief denotes certain acceptance resulting from revelation and an open heart as well as from seeing [ truth ] with the light of the mind. This last is the least to lend itself to increase. I shall, however, say that the way in which the mind accepts certain things which are free of doubt differs. Thus the way the mind accepts the fact that two are greater than one [ 108 ] is unlike the way it accepts the fact that the world is created and originated, although there is not the slightest doubt of the certainty of either fact. For the certain things differ in the degrees of their clarity and in the degrees to which the mind accepts them. We touched on this subject in the section on certainty (*yaqīn*) in the Book of Knowledge under the characteristics of the learned men of the hereafter; therefore there is no need to go over it again. In all these usages it became evident that what they have said concerning the increase and depreciation of belief was true. How could it not be true when we have the express testimony of tradition that "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." According to another tradition, "He will be brought forth from Hell fire, who has in his heart the weight of a dinar of belief."[1] Why then should the amount

1. *Cf.* Al-Bukhāri Riqāq : 35, 51 ; abu-Dāwūd, Libās : 26.

differ if the belief in the heart does not vary?

(A problem). You may ask, "What then have the Fathers meant with the saying, 'If it be the will of God I am a believer?'" A qualification implies doubt, and to entertain doubts concerning the veracity of belief amounts to unbelief. Yet all the Fathers used to refrain from giving a definite reply concerning belief, and were extremely careful not to commit themselves. In this connexion Sufyān al-Thawri said, "He who says, 'I am a believer in the sight of God', is a liar; and he who says, 'I am really a believer', is an innovator." But how can he be a liar when he himself knows that he is a believer? For he who is a believer in himself is a believer in the sight of God, just as he who is big[1] and generous in himself and is aware of this fact, will be big and generous in the sight of God. The same is true of him who is likewise glad, or sad, or hearing, or seeing. On the other hand if man were asked whether or not he was an animal it would not be fitting for him to reply, "If it be the will of God, I am an animal." When Sufyān made this statement he was asked, "What then shall we say?" Thereupon he replied, "We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us."[2] And what is the difference between saying, "We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us" and saying, "I am a believer?"

Once upon a time al-Ḥasan [al-Basri] was asked, "Art thou a believer?" To which he replied, "If it be the will of God." Thereupon he was told, "O

1. Arabic *ṭawil*, lit. tall. 2. *Sūrah* II : 130.

Abu-Sa'īd? Why do you qualify your belief?" He answered and said, "I fear saying, 'Yes', and then God will say, 'Thou hast lied, Ḥasan.' Then I shall rightly merit His punishment." He also used to say, "I fear that God may find out that I have done something abominable to Him and will consequently abhor me and say, 'Go away. I accept none of thy works.' Then I shall be toiling in vain."

Ibrāhīm ibn-Adham once said, "Whenever you are asked, 'Are you a believer?' say, 'There is no god but Allah'." At another time he said, "Say, 'I do not doubt belief; your question to me is an innovation'."

'Alqamah[1] was once asked, "Are you a believer? To which he replied, "I do hope so. If it be the will of God."

[Sufyān] al-Thawri said, "We believe in God and in His angels, books, and apostles. But we do not know what we are in the sight of God."

[You may ask all this and say], "What then is the meaning of all these qualifications?" The answer to your question is that these qualifications are correct and are put forward for four reasons, two of which arise from doubt, not of the reality of belief itself, but of its end and perfectness; and two do not arise from doubt at all.

The first reason which does not arise from any doubt at all is the care not to be decisive for fear of self-justification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and making one's self out to be pure. Said God, "Assert not your own

1. Ibn-Qays A.H. 62/A.D. 681-82. See ibn-Sa'd, Vol. 6, pp. 57-62.

purity."[1] And again, "Hast thou not marked those who hold themselves to be righteous?"[2] And again, "Behold how they devise a lie of God."[3]

A certain wise man was once asked, "What is detestable truth?" He replied, "Man's praise of himself." Belief is one of the highest forms of praise and to be definitely certain of it amounts to absolute justification. The formula of qualification (i.e. if it be the will of God) is nothing but an attempt to temper and tone down such justification, just as when the man is told that he is a physician, or a jurisprudent, or a commentator, he will say, "If it be the will of God," not because he doubts the fact but simply to avoid being boastful. This formula is that of disavowing and disclaiming the fact itself and means disclaiming one of the implications of the fact which is [self-] justification. Following this interpretation, when the person is asked concerning something uncomplimentary, it will not be fitting for him to put forth any such qualification.

The second reason for the use of these qualifications is courtesy (*ta'addub*) by remembering God at every time and under all conditions, and by submitting all things unto His Will. Thus God instructed His Prophet in courtesy and said to him, "Say not thou of a thing, 'I will surely do it tomorrow;' without, 'if it be the will of God'."[4] Nor has God limited [the use of the qualifying phrase] to those things the occurrence of which is

1. *Sūrah* LXII : 33. 2. *Sūrah* IV : 52. 3. *Sūrah* IV : 53.
4. *Sūrah* XVIII : 23.

subject to doubt. On the contrary He said, "Ye shall surely enter the sacred mosque, if it be the will of God, in full security, having your heads shaved and your hair cut: ye shall not fear;"[1] although He had full knowledge that they were to enter undoubtedly therein and that He had willed their entrance. What God had meant was to instruct the Prophet in the use of the qualifying formula. Consequently the Prophet learned the lesson and showed his courtesy by the use of that formula in connexion with everything he had said—whether that thing was known with certainty or doubtful; so that when he entered the cemetery, he said, "Peace be upon you, the believing inmates of this abode.. Verily, if it be the will of God, we shall follow you."[2] This he said, notwithstanding the fact that death is not subject to any doubt, because courtesy demands that God be always remembered and that all things be made dependent upon Him. This formula indicates such a thing and has become, by virtue of its common use, representative of the expression of desires and wishes. Thus when you are told that such and such a person is about to die and should happen to say, "If it be the will of God," you betray your desire and not your doubt. The same is true when you are told that a certain person will recover from his sickness and you say, "If it be the will of God," by way of expressing your earnest desire. The phrase has thus been transferred from one expressing doubt to one which signifies desire. In the same way also is its transfer to express courtesy and respect for remember-

1. *Sūrah* XLVIII : 27. 2. Muslim, Janā'iz ; 103, 104.

ing God under all conditions.

The third reason for the use of those qualifications arises from doubt [109] and means, "If it be the will of God, I am truly a believer," since God spoke of some particular men as being truly believers.[1] Consequently believers are divided into two groups: [those who are described as truly believers and those who are not]. This arises from doubt concerning the perfection of belief and not its reality. Every person doubts the perfectness of his belief, yet this doubt does not constitute unbelief. Doubting the perfectness of belief is right and justified for two reasons: The first is because hypocrisy militates against the perfectness of belief, and hypocrisy is something hidden while freedom from it is readily discerned or determined. The second is because belief is perfected through the fulfilment of good works which are not known to exist in their perfect form.

As to works God said, "The true believers are those only who believe in God and His Apostle, and afterwards doubt not; and who contend with their substance and their persons for the cause of God—these are the truthful."[2] The doubt would, therefore, be concerning this truthfulness. Similarly God said, "But righteousness is to believe in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Book, and the prophets."[3] Thus God laid down twenty qualities, such as the fulfilment of promises and fortitude under hardships, as conditions for belief, and then said [of those who possess them], "These are they

1. *Sūrah* VIII; 4 2. *Sūrah* XLIX: 15 3. *Sūrah* II: 172.

who are true."[1] God also said, "God will raise those of you who believe, and those to whom knowledge is given, to lofty grades."[2] And again He said, "Those among you who contributed before the victory, and fought, shall be differently treated from certain other among you."[3] He also said, "They are of varying ranks before God."[4]

The Apostle said, "Belief is like unto a nude who should be clothed with piety."[5] And again, "Belief comprises over seventy divisions, the least of which is to clear the road of obstacles."[6] This shows the dependence of the perfectness of belief on good works. Its dependence on freedom from hypocrisy and concealed polytheism is shown by the words of the Apostle when he said, "Four things, if they obtain in a person make him an utter hypocrite, no matter how much he prays, and fasts, and claims that he is a believer; he who lies when he speaks, breaks a promise when he pledges his word, betrays a confidence when he is trusted, and deviates from justice when he enters a controversy."[7] According to another version "And when he makes a compact with his neighbour, he defrauds him."[8]

A tradition related on the authority of Abu-Sa'īd al-Khudri, says, "The hearts are of four kinds : a sealed heart, which is the heart of the unbeliever ; a double-faced heart, which is the heart of the hypocrite; a clean heart from the midst of which a radiant lamp sheds its radiant light ; and a heart which contains

1. *Sūrah* II : 172. 2. *Sūrah* LVIII : 12.
3. *Sūrah* LVII : 10. 4. *Sūrah* III : 157. 5. Unidentified.
6. *Cf.* Al-Bukhārī, Īmān : 2 ; ibn-Mājah. Intro. 9.
7. Al-Bukhārī, Īmān, 24. 8. Al-Tirmidhi, Īmān : 14.

some belief and some hypocrisy. The belief it contains is like unto the vegetable which receives its nourishment from fresh waters. The hypocrisy it contains is like unto an ulcer which feeds on pus and blood, whichever of the two substances will prevail will determine its fate."[1] According to another version "whichever will prevail will seal his doom." The Apostle also said, "The worst hypocrites of this people are its Qur'ān readers."[2] According to another tradition, "Polytheism among my people is more subtle than the creeping of the ant on the rock."[3]

Ḥudhayfah said, "At the time of the Apostle there were things which made the man who repeated them a hypocrite as long as he lived. Now, however, I hear these same things repeated ten times a day, [and no one seems to mind]."[4] A certain learned man said, "The person closest to hypocrisy is he who deems himself free thereof." Ḥudhayfah also said, "Hypocrites are more numerous today than they were at the time of the Prophet. At that time they used to conceal their hypocrisy; now they [are not ashamed to] reveal it."[5] Such hypocrisy militates against the reality of belief as well as against its perfectness. It is something concealed and subtle: the farthest removed from it are those who are constantly afraid of it, while those who deem themselves free of it are they who are nearest to it.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri was once told, "There is no more hypocrisy nowadays." To which he replied, "Brother! Were the hypocrites to perish from the

1. Unidentified. 2. Unidentified. 3. Unidentified.
4. Unidentified. 5 Al-Ṭayālisi : 440.

land you would feel lonely on the way." Again either al-Ḥasan himself or someone else said, "Were tails to grow [by a miracle] on the backs of the hypocrites and trail behind them, our feet would no longer be able to touch the earth."

Once upon a time Ibn-'Umar, on hearing a man speak disparagingly of al-Ḥajjāj,[1] told him, "Would you speak disparagingly of him if he were here present?" The man answered, "No." Thereupon Ibn-'Umar said, "We used to consider this hypocritical at the time of the Apostle. The Apostle said, 'He who is double-tongued in this world will, in the hereafter, be made double tongued by God'." The Apostle also said, "The worst man is the double-faced who meets one people with one face and another people with another face."

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri was once told, "There are some who say that they do not fear hypocrisy." Thereupon he answered, "By God, I would rather be sure that I am free of hypocrisy than have all the world's contents [110] gold." Al-Ḥasan also said, "Among the different kinds of hypocrisy are the disagreements between the tongue and the heart, between the secret and the public, and between the entrance and the exit."

A certain person told Ḥudhayfah, "Verily I fear I am a hypocrite." To which Ḥudhayfah replied, "Fear not. If you were a hypocrite you would not have feared hypocrisy. Verily hypocrisy does not

1. Ibn-Yūsuf al-Thaqafi A.H. 95/A.D. 714, the great Umayyad governor. For his life see Ibn-Qutaybah, pp. 201-202; Ibn-Khallikān Vol. I, pp. 218-224.

fear hypocrisy."

Ibn-abi-Mulaykah said, "I have known one hundred and thirty [and according to another version one hundred and fifty] of the Companions of the Prophet, all of whom feared hypocrisy."

It was related that the Apostle of God was once sitting with a group of his Companions who were discussing a certain man and praising him to the skies. Suddenly, while they were in the midst of their discussion, the man himself appeared before them with his face still wet with the water of ablution, carrying his shoes in his hands and his forehead covered with dust from prayer. Thereupon they said to the Apostle "Behold. This is the man whom we were discussing." The Prophet, turning to them, said, "I see on his face the mark of Satan." Then the man arrived and, after greeting the group, sat in their midst. The Prophet then addressed him and said, "Tell me, I beseech thee by God, hast thou not said to thyself when thou approached the group that there was no one among them who was better than thee?" The man replied. "O my God! Yes, I have."

In his prayer the Apostle said, "O God, I seek refuge in thee against the evil of things I did and things I left undone."[1] He was then told, "Art thou afraid O Apostle of God?" To which he replied, "What could make me feel secure when the heart lie between two of the fingers of the Merciful [God], and He doeth with them what He willeth?"[2] Said God, "And there shall appear to them, from God, things

1. Ibn-Mājah, Du'ā' : 3 ; al-Nasā'i, Isti'ādhah : 57, 58.
2. Al-Tirmidhi, Da'awāt : 88.

they have never reckoned on."[1] This was interpreted in commentaries to mean that men have done things which they thought were good but [on the day of judgment] these things appeared in the balance in the scale of evil.

[Al-] Sari al-Saqaṭi once said, "If a person enters a garden containing trees of every kind and on these are birds of every kind, and then each bird calls to him in a different language saying, 'Peace be upon thee, O friend of God', and as a result he feels very well pleased and satisfied, he becomes a captive in their hands." These traditions and narratives reveal to you the gravity of the matter, particularly because of the subtle nature of hypocrisy and hidden polytheism, and bring out the fact that no one can be safe against them. This led 'Umar ibn-Khaṭṭāb to ask Ḥudhayfah about himself—whether or not he was numbered among the hypocrites.

Abu-Sulaymān al-Dārāni said, "I heard a certain governor say something and I wanted to express my disapproval of it but feared lest he order me to be killed. And although I feared not death I was afraid lest I be tempted to boast before men when my spirit departs. For this reason I refrained from expressing my disapproval of the governor's words.

This kind of hypocrisy militates against the truth, perfectness, and purity of belief, rather than against its reality. For hypocrisy is of two kinds: The one results in parting with religion, pursuing infidels and joining the company of those who are deemed eternally

1. *Sūrah* XXXIX : 48.

to Hell fire; the second leads the person to Hell fire for a certain period of time and puts him down from the lofty heights of Paradise (*'illiyūn*)[1] and denotes the saints from their exalted ranks. It is a field open to doubt and therefore it is desirable to resort to the use of qualifications therein. This kind of hypocrisy rises from the disparityand disagreement between the secret and the public, from feeling secure from the deep counsel of God,[2] and from conceit and other things from which only the saints are free.

The fourth reason for the use of these qualifications arises also from doubt. It is the fear of the end, for no one knows whether or not he will still have any belief at the hour of death. If he should end with unbelief all his previous works would come to naught and fail, because [the value of these works] depends entirely upon their good ending. Thus if a fasting person were asked early in the day concerning the validity of his fast and replied, "I am surely fasting," but later in the day he broke his fast, it would become evident that he was lying since the validity of his fast depends upon the maintenance of the fast until sunset at the end of the day. And just as the day is the set period for the fulfilment of fasting, so the lifetime is the set period for the fulfilment of the validity of belief. To describe it as valid before its conclusion simply because it has already been fulfilled in part is very doubtful and its end is frightful. It was because of the end that most of the [God-] fearing have wept. For the end is the outcome of a pre-ordained

1. *Cf. Sūrah* LXXXIII : 18-19 ; Gen. xiv : 18. Evidently from Heb.
2. *Cf. Sūrah* VII : 97.

event and the result of the eternal will which does not become known except when the pre-ordained event itself takes place and which no human being can ever tell. The fear of the end is the result of the fear of that which was pre-ordained and there may appear in the present a thing which will give the lie to the words, ["I am a believer"]. And who can be sure that he is one of those for whom God has pre-ordained good things?[1] It has been said that the words of God, "God the stupor of death cometh upon him,"[2] mean that the pre-ordained thing [has been fulfilled] and made known. One of the Fathers said that works would be judged by their ends. Abu-al-Dardā' used to swear by God saying, "There is no one who feels safe in his belief who is not robbed of it." It was also said that some sinful deeds were not punished except by their sad ends. We seek refuge in God against such deeds and such punishments. It has also been said that such punishments await those who falsely claim sainthood and the gift of miracles (*karāmah*).

One of the gnostics once said, "If I were given the choice between martyrdom at the outer gate of the house and death as a true believer at the door of an inner room, I would, choose the latter because I do not know what might occur to me and divert my heart from true belief on my way [from the inner room] to the outer gate [111] of the house." Another said, "If I had known a certain person to have been a true believer for the last fifty years and then, even though so frail a thing as a pole should hide him from my

1. *Cf. Sūrah* XXI : 101. 2. *Sūrah* L : 18.

sight before his death, I could not be sure that he died a true believer."

According to one condition, "Whoever says, 'I am a believer', is an infidel; and whoever says, 'I am learned', is ignorant."[1] In the interpretation of the words of the God, "And the words of thy Lord are perfect in truth and in justice,"[2] it has been said that 'perfect in truth' relates to those who died in belief and 'perfect in justice', to those who died in polytheism. God also said, "And the final issue of all things is unto God."[3] No matter how little doubt may be in such cases the resort to qualification is obligatory. since belief is a means of grace for the hereafter just as fasting is a means of grace for absolving the heart from guilt in this life. Whatever fast is rendered void before sunset is no longer a fast and will not absolve from guilt. The same thing is true of belief. In fact a person may be asked about a previous fast concerning which there is no doubt. He will be asked, "Have you fasted yesterday?" and he will reply. "Yes, if it were the will of God." For genuine fasting is the only acceptable fasting and the acceptable fasting is unknown except to God. For this reason it is desirable to use the qualification (*istithnā*), if it be the will of God, in all the works of righteousness. This will imply doubt as to their acceptance [by God], since such acceptance, despite the outward fulfilment of all the prerequisites of validity, may be blocked by hidden cause unknown except to God, the Lord of Lords of the mighty majesty. Hence it is desirable

1. Unidentified.
2. *Sūrah* VI : 115.
3. *Sūrah* XXVII : 4.

to entertain some doubts concerning the validity [of belief as well as all the works of righteousness].

These, therefore, are the different reasons for the desirability of qualifying one's assertion of his belief, and with them we conclude the Book on the foundations of the Articles of Faith.

Here ends the Book.

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## INDEX OF ARABIC TERMS


*abadi*, 1
*'Adam*, 60
*ahal al-ahwā'*, 19
*ahl al-bāṭin*, 68
*ahl al-ḥaqq*, 67
*akwān*, 31
*'ālam al-ghayb*, 119
*'ālam al-malakūt*, 119
*'ālam al-mulk*, 119
*'ālam-al-shahādah*, 119
*'aqd bi'l-qalb*, 105
*'araḍ*, 20, 64
*'ārif*, 37
*aṣl*, 56
*aṣlaḥ, al-*, 56, 84
*asrār*, 35
*azali*, 1, 62

*bāb*, 120
*baqā'*, 60
*bāṭin*, 16, 37
*bay'ah*, 95

*daf'*, 63
*ḍarūri*, 79
*dunyawi*, 105

*farḍ*, 1
*farḍ 'ayn*, 16
*farḍ kifāyah*, 16, 32
*fasād al-waḍ'*, 20
*fāsiq*, 105
*fiṭrah*, 16
*furūḍ kifāyāt*, 33

*ḥanīf*, 59
*ḥarakah*, 77
*ḥawḍ*, 9
*ḥulūl*, 4n.

*idbār*, 43
*idh'ān*, 100
*idrāk*, 31n.
*idrākāt*, 31
*ijmā'*, 106
*ijtihād*, 95
*ikhtiyār* 95
*iktisāb*, 79
*'illiyūn*, 132
*'ilm al-Farā'iḍ*, 20
*'ilm al-kalām*, 26
*'ilm al-mu'āmalah*, 120
*'ilm al-mukāshafah*, 120
*īmān*, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 120
*inqiyād*, 100
*intiqāl*, 4n., 51

*iqbāl*, 41
*irādah*, 81
*istinjā'*, 19
*istiqrār*, 51
*istislām*, 100, 111
*istithnā'*, 134
*istiwā'*, 51
*i'timād*, 31n
*i'timādāt*, 31
*i'tiqād*, 117
*i'tirāf bi'l-lisān*, 100

*jabr*, 79
*jawhar*, 20
*jihād*, 32
*jihah*, 56, 69
*jism*, 63

*kabā'ir*, 105
*kalām*, 16, 32
*karāmah*, 133
*kasb*, 79
*kasr*, 20
*kawn*, 25n.
*Kawthar, al-*, 9
*khiyār*, 26
*kifāyah*, 97

*madhhab*, 30
*man'*, 31
*mandūb*, 16
*maqāmāt*, 35
*maqdūr*, 78
*maqdūrah*, 78
*mayl*, 31n.
*mazīd*, 116
*mi'rāj, al-*, 52
*mīzān, al-*, 46, 50
*mu'āmalah, al-*, 38
*mubāḥ*, 16
*mujāhadah*, 15, 35
*mūjib*, 81
*mujtahid*, 95
*mukāshafah, al-*, 33
*muktasabah*, 79
*munfarid*, 1
*muqarrabūn, al-*, 9, 39
*mutaḥayyiz*, 63

*naqḍ*, 20
*nūr al-baṣīrah*, 119
*nuzūl*, 51

*qadar*, 24
*qadīm*, 1, 62, 73
*qidam*, 60
*qiyās*, 20
*qudrah*, 77, 78, 79

*rubūbīyah*, 37
*rūḥ, al-*, 31
*rukn*, 56, 108
*ru'yah*, 31, 69

*Sabab*, 62

*Sābiq*, 60
*ṣamad*, 1
*sam'iyāt*, 57
*shahādah, al-*, 6
*shahādah bi'l-lisān*, 105
*shar', al-*, 100
*shirk*, 16
*ṣirāṭ, al-*, 9, 46, 50, 94
*sirr*, 16, 35, 37
*ṣuwar*, 24

*ta'addub*, 124
*tadākhul*, 104
*ta'diyah*, 20
*takbīr*, 115
*taklīf*, 7, 34, 96
*talqīn*, 13
*tanzīh*, 2
*taqlīd*, 13, 117
*ṭarayān*, 62
*ṭāri'*, 60
*tarkīb*, 20
*tasbīḥ*, 115
*taṣdīq*, 100, 108
*taṣdīq bi'l-qalb*, 100, 117
*taslīm*, 100
*tazkiyat al-nafs*, 123

*ukhrawi*, 105
*ummi*, 8, 91

*wājib*, 82, 84
*wara'*, 96

*yaqīn*, 16, 121

*ẓāhir*, 37
*zindīq*, 18, 19

## INDEX OF PROPER NAMES


'Abbās, ibn-, 22, 23, 34, 36
'Abd-al-A'la, ibn-, 17
Abraham, 21, 22, 72
Adham, Ibrāhīm ibn-, 123
'Affān, Uthmān ibn-, 10, 94, 95
'Ā'isha, 23
Akhtal, al-, 67
'Ali, *see* Ṭālib, 'Ali ibn abi-
'Alqamah, 123
'Amīrah, Yazīd ibn-, 23
Anas, Mālik ibn-, 17, 18, 19, 51
Arabas, 90, 101
Ash'ari, al-, 114
Ash'arites, 51

Bakr, abu-, *see* Ṣiddīq, abu-Bakr al-
Baṣri, al-Ḥasan al-, 19, 23, 122, 123, 128, 129
Bishr, ibn-Marwān, 67

Christians, 90, 117

Dārāni, abu Sulaymān al-, 131
Dardā', abu-al-, 133

Gabriel, 92, 101, 108
Greeks, 91

Ḥafṣ al-Fard, 17
Ḥajar al-Aswad, al., 50
Ḥajjāj, al-, *see* Yūsuf, al-Ḥajjāj ibn-.
Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn-, 17, 18, 50, 51, 52
Ḥasan al Baṣri, al-, *see* Baṣri, al-,
Ḥadhayfah, 110, 128, 129, 131
Hurayrah, abu-, 36

*Iqtiṣād fi al-I'tiqād, al-*, 30
'Irāq, al-, 67

Jahl, abu-, 83
Jews, 90, 118

Karābīsi, al-, 17
Khārijites, 22, 34
Khaṭṭāb, 'Umar ibn-al-, 10, 94, 129, 131
Khudri, abu-Sa'īd, 127

Makki, abu-Ṭalib al-, 99, 106
Mālik ibn-Anas, *see* Anas, Mālik ibn-,
Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh ibn-, 23, 24
Moses, 68
Ma'āwiyah, 95, 96
Muḥāsibi, al-, 18
Mulaykah, ibn-abi-, 130
Munkar, 8, 50, 57, 92
Murji'ites, 109, 111
Mu'tazilites, 17, 51, 68, 81, 83, 85, 87, 105, 107, 111, 114, 116

Nakīr, 8, 50, 57, 92

Noah, 22

Pharaoh, 22

Quraysh, 97

Rāfiḍites, 95
Rāwandi, al, al-, 42
Risālah al-Qudsīyah, al-, 30, 53

Ṣābians, 90
Sa'id, abu-, *see* Baṣri, Ḥaṣan al-
Saqaṭi, al-Sari al-, 131
Shāfi'ī, al-, 17, 18, 34
Ṣiddīq, abu-Bakr al- 10, 16, 37, 41, 94, 95
Sufyān al-Thawri, *see* Thawri,
Sufyān, al-,
Ṭālib, 'Ali ibn-, abī 10, 22, 23 34, 94, 95, 96
Thawri, Sufyān al-. 17, 122
Tustari, al-, 37

'Uthmān, *see* 'Affān, 'Uthmān ibn-

Waqqaṣ, Sa'd ibn-abi-, 102, 103

Yaman, al-, 50
Yawm al-Jamal, 23n.
Yūsuf, abu-, 19
Yūsuf, al-Ḥajjāj ibn-. 129

Za'farāni, al-, 18